



Education
and Training

Kindergarten Infrastructure and Services Plan

Alpine Shire

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1. INTRODUCTION

1.1. REFORM CONTEXT

In an Australian first, the Victorian Government has committed to implement Three-Year-Old Kindergarten for all children over a 10-year roll-out with a total investment of almost \$5 billion, including \$1.68 billion to support the infrastructure expansion required for the reform. This reform will add another year of universal funded kindergarten so that, by 2029, all children in Victoria will have access to two years of play-based learning through a funded kindergarten program.

1.2. PURPOSE OF KISPS

Three-Year-Old Kindergarten will require a large expansion of kindergarten across the State. The Government has invited all 79 Victorian Local Governments to discuss and agree upon a Kindergarten Infrastructure and Services Plan (KISP) for their Local Government Area (LGA).

Each KISP has been jointly developed with Local Government and published to estimate the growth in demand for kindergarten within the LGA. The KISPs will help all kindergarten providers meet demand and provide a clear picture of infrastructure need across the State.

While a KISP is not a funding document and does not define required infrastructure projects or commit any party to funding specific projects, it is expected that future investment requests through Building Blocks and funding decisions about Local Government and not-for-profit projects would align with the relevant KISP.

1.3. HOW TO USE THE KISP

Each KISP contains estimates of future kindergarten supply of, and demand for, Three and Four-Year-Old Kindergarten places against existing enrolment capacity. Not-for-profit and for-profit providers can use these estimates to inform their plans to expand kindergarten programs, establish new services or invest in new or extended facilities.

For example, KISPs provide demand estimates in terms of where, when and how much demand for kindergarten places will grow in an LGA. KISPs also estimate where and how many kindergarten places providers can accommodate in existing facilities before an area needs new infrastructure to meet demand. The estimates can be used to inform decisions about where and when expansions of kindergarten program capacity and the construction of new or extended facilities are needed to meet demand growth.

Where there is an agreed KISP for the LGA, the Local Government and not-for-profit kindergarten providers seeking co-investments through the Building Blocks Capacity Building stream must refer to, and align their proposed project with, the infrastructure need identified in the KISP.

1.4. STRUCTURE OF THE KISP

Each KISP consists of the following sections:

- **Section 1:** A short introduction to the Three-Year-Old Kindergarten reform and the KISP.

- **Section 2:** A map of existing and planned Early Childhood Education and Care service locations.
- **Section 3:** Local knowledge and context relevant to the expansion of kindergarten services.
- **Section 4:** Funded kindergarten demand estimates.

1.5. DISCLAIMER

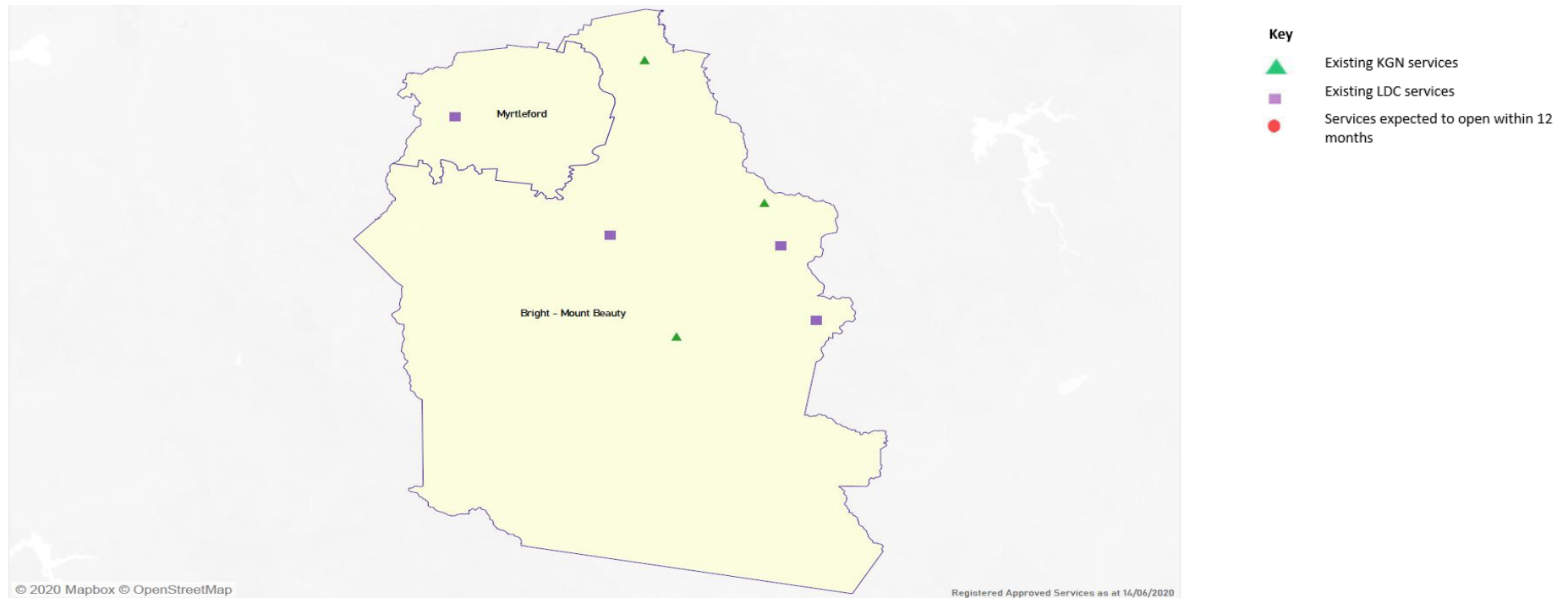
All data presented in this document are estimates only and are based on the best information available to the Department and Local Government at the time. They are published on an as-is basis and are for informational purposes only. They are subject to adjustment in response to market forces and as new data and other relevant information becomes available. The data may under- or over-estimate both total demand in a given location or year and the capacity for new demand to be met by providers. As a result, operational and business decisions should not be made solely based on this document. Any use of this data is solely at the risk of the user. The Department and Local Government accept no responsibility for any loss or damage, either direct or incidental, that may result from the use of the data.

2. MAP OF EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION SERVICES IN ALPINE SHIRE

The map below shows the distribution of currently operating and new services that are planned to open in the future in the LGA and across its communities.

This map has been prepared using Departmental data, from both the National Quality Agenda IT System (NQAITS) and the Victorian School Building Authority (VSBA). Where applicable, this map has been refined by the Alpine Shire Council and the Department to capture other services that are planned to open in the future.

Note: In some instances, SA2s overlap multiple LGAs. Where this occurs, the SA2 and any services within it, are allocated to the LGA that it has the greater land area in. As a result, services that sit within these SA2s have been excluded from the diagram below as they are represented on the neighbouring LGA's map.



3. LOCAL CONTEXT

3.1 PURPOSE

Local, place-based knowledge and context play an important role in supporting the implementation of Three-Year-Old Kindergarten across Victoria. This section of the KISP documents this knowledge and context and has informed the funded kindergarten enrolment estimates in Section 4.

3.2 KEY CONSIDERATIONS

Key demographic trends that influence demand for kindergarten

Population Growth

The Estimated Residential Population (ERP) has predicted population growth in the Alpine Shire (0.66%) to be slower than the Regional Victoria average (1.37%). There are several factors and trends locally that would indicate these estimates are likely to be under forecast. These include: higher than usual real estate demand (to buy and to rent) of which may be as a result of metropolitan people deciding to make a tree change due to COVID19 and the ability to work remotely; first home buyers making the move to regional Victoria as a result of cheaper real estate prices and the government incentives offered to make the change; the Relocation Assistance Grants to entice agricultural workers to regional areas and others who are simply tree changers.

Real Estate Demand

Current demand for real estate is high in the Alpine Shire for rentals and sales. All real estate agents report that property demand outstrips supply and there are very high rental waiting lists. This demand is particularly high in Bright and Myrtleford. In 2019 there were 213 houses and 45 apartments sold across the Alpine Shire.

Agents have highlighted the following key real estate trends in Alpine Shire:

- A big demand for permanent rental properties. Current demand well exceeds the supply with waiting lists in Bright and Myrtleford with no available properties. Waiting lists mainly comprised of young couples or young families.
- A marked increase in interest in both rentals and sales since the start of the COVID19 pandemic. A large percentage of these are young couples or young families looking to relocate from metro.

Background research being used to develop the Alpine Shire Economic Development Strategy highlights:

- Demand for housing is high and property prices have increased substantially over the past 10 years with the median house price rising 82%.

Subdivisions and Building Permits

There is a 250-lot subdivision currently under consideration in Bright. A Land Use Development Strategy is also under development which will look at further identifying land opportunities that could to be rezoned to residential due to the high demand of land for sale in the Alpine Shire.

COVID 'Tree Change' and Remote Working

COVID-19 has led to an increasing trend of remote work as more employers offer greater flexibility in working environments. This has resulted in many metropolitan residents seeking a 'tree-change'. Propertyupdate.com.au reported that regional property searches are up 42.7% on last year. It is expected that the Alpine Shire will attract more residents chasing a lifestyle change. The increased interest by 'tree-changers' has already been confirmed by all real estate agents within the Alpine Shire.

Preference of Integrated Long Day Care over Sessional Kindergarten

There is an increasing trend, particularly in Bright and Myrtleford, for a preference of integrated kindergarten/long day care over sessional kindergarten. Feedback from kindergartens report that this is due to increasing number of families with two working parents/carers who require additional care for their children.

Alpine Children's Services state this has been the case in Bright for several years and they no longer offer any 5-hour programs due to lack of interest. This year in Myrtleford the integrated long day care program filled immediately (30 places) and the other programs (2 x 7.5 hour and 3 x 5-hour days) have been less popular. Several families who missed out on the integrated program have been placed in the 2 x 7.5-hour program and are now on the waiting list for additional days of LDC kindergarten. Staffing and recruitment challenges are currently restricting program delivery in Myrtleford.

Socio-Economic Disadvantage

There are some significant pockets of socio-economic disadvantage in the Alpine Shire, which can be particularly seen in Myrtleford, as is evidenced by the following data:

Indicator	Myrtleford	Bright	Mt Beauty	Victoria	Data Source
Low Income Households	44.7%	37.7%	41.6%	40.2	ABS Census of Population 2016
Schooling Year 10 or below	39.9%	31.0%	33.4%	34.7%	ABS Census of Population 2016
Holding no formal qualifications	48.6%	33.7%	37.9%	42.8%	ABS Census of Population 2016
SEIFA- Index of Relative Socio-Economic Disadvantage	935.8	1007.6	1006.5	-	ABS Census Population 2016

Projects or trends that may influence supply of early childhood education and care

Alpine View Children's Centre in Bright was successful in receiving funding through the Building Blocks Grants Scheme and will undergo extension works during 2021. On completion, these works will increase the kindergarten capacity by 18; allowing them to meet kindergarten demands and deliver Three-Year-Old Kindergarten.

Alpine Children's Services, which operate four of the seven services in the Shire, have experienced ongoing challenges in recruiting Bachelor qualified educators which in turn has significantly impacted their ability to offer kindergarten services. The above-mentioned rental shortage has added to the challenges in recruiting Early Childhood Educators to the Alpine Shire area, with recruits declining positions due to being unable to find a rental property.

Key local geographic considerations or information relevant to Three-Year-Old Kindergarten

Distance between Kindergartens and Geographic Landscape

In Alpine Shire there is one kindergarten or long day care centre located in each town. Due to the geographical landscape and distance between towns it is not normal practice or reasonable for a parent/carer to drive their child to another town for kindergarten.

The KISP considers Mt Beauty and Bright as the one 'community' for the purpose of kindergarten supply and demand data based on Australian Bureau of Statistics categories. It is important to note that the towns are located 30kms apart with the connecting road going over the Tawonga Gap which experiences snow and ice in the winter months. It is not practical or reasonable for a parent/carer from Bright to drive their child to Mt Beauty for kindergarten, or vice versa.

Limited public transport

The current location of all kindergartens/long day care are within the town centres which means that families living in all outlying areas such as Nug Nug, Freeburgh, Ovens etc. are required to travel into town to access kindergarten. There is limited to no public transport in these areas and the time and cost requirement could be a potential barrier for three-year-old kindergarten engagement. These geographic experiences should be considered when planning models of delivery.

Other information about the expansion of early childhood services

Mountain View Children's Centre in Myrtleford Building

There are challenges in delivering quality kindergarten and early childhood services at Mountain View Children's Centre in Myrtleford due to the building no longer being fit for purpose. Issues with the building include the kitchen not being able to cater for 97 children per day, the building layout not supporting a progressive educational program, no private meeting room, inadequate natural light and maintenance issues. The Shire will seek to address these issues by applying for a Victorian Government Building Blocks grant.

4. FUNDED KINDERGARTEN ENROLMENT ESTIMATES BETWEEN 2021-29 FOR ALPINE SHIRE

4.1 PURPOSE

As Three-Year-Old Kindergarten is rolled-out and Victoria's population grows, demand for both Three and Four-Year-Old Kindergarten places will increase significantly. While additional capacity will be needed to meet this demand, this will vary across the State and over time, due to differences in the capacity of existing services, growth trends and sector composition.

To identify where, when and how many additional kindergarten places are expected over the roll-out in Alpine Shire, the Alpine Shire Council and the Department have developed:

1. A summary of the current provision of kindergarten within the LGA (**Section 4.3**).
2. An approach to optimising the utilisation of existing services and infrastructure through 'change management' strategies that the Alpine Shire Council and the Department will support to help meet additional demand in the LGA (**Section 4.4**).
3. An estimate of the Three and Four-Year-Old kindergarten places that cannot be met through existing services for the 2021-29 period, taking into account the additional demand that can be accommodated by optimising utilisation of existing services and infrastructure through point 2, above (**Section 4.5**).

Local Government and providers can use these published estimates to inform reform implementation activities such as service planning, kindergarten program expansion, infrastructure investments and Building Blocks funding applications in alignment with future demand over the 10-year roll-out.

4.2 METHODOLOGY

The estimated Three and Four-Year-Old Kindergarten places used in the following sections have been agreed between the Alpine Shire Council and the Department, and were informed by:

- Estimates developed by the Department which draw on a range of inputs, including population forecasts, current enrolments and results from the Kindergarten Capacity Assessment Program (KCAP), conducted in 2019.
- The estimated capacity of new services that are planned to open in the LGA (Section 2)
- Local knowledge and context provided by the Local Government (Section 3) that explains particular issues and trends in their area.
- The approach to optimising utilisation of existing services in the LGA (Section 4.4), and
- Other sources, such as modelling undertaken by Local Governments and local data.

The KISP measures a service's capacity to deliver funded kindergarten in terms of the number of children it could enrol in Three and Four-Year-Old Kindergarten. The number of funded kindergarten places is different from a service's licensed or approved places, which count the number of children permitted to attend the service at any one time under the license. Many services can enrol more children in their funded kindergarten program(s) than they have licensed places for because they can run more than one kindergarten program per week. Kindergarten places are therefore a more accurate measure of service kindergarten capacity than licensed places.

Three-Year-Old Kindergarten places have been presented as 15-hour places so they can be easily compared to Four-Year-Old Kindergarten places. Moreover, when Three-Year-Old Kindergarten is fully rolled-out in 2029, every three-year-old child will have access to 15-hours of kindergarten.

From 2023 all providers will have flexibility to determine how many hours of funded Three-Year-Old Kindergarten they deliver per week, with a minimum of five hours and a maximum of 15-hours funded pro-rata. It is expected that hours offered will vary. Given this variation, **it is important to be aware that during the transition to all three-year-old children receiving 15-hours of funded kindergarten per week in 2029, the 15-hour places presented in this report may represent multiple three-year-old places that individually receive less than 15-hours of kindergarten per week.**

These estimates have been developed at an LGA and community level to show the overall forecast and variation within an area. The KISP defines community at the Statistical Area Level 2, which is medium-sized areas which represent a community that interacts socially and economically, with a population range of 3,000 to 25,000 people, and an average population of about 10,000 people.

4.3 SUMMARY OF CURRENT KINDERGARTEN PROVISION

The figures below provide a summary of current kindergarten provision within the LGA and provide relevant context for the estimates of demand for funded kindergarten places included in Section 4.5. The data included in this section are largely drawn from:

- The Kindergarten Capacity Assessment Program (KCAP), collected between June and October 2019.
- The Department's Kindergarten Information Management System (KIMS), as at 2019.
- The Department's Quality and Regulatory Division (QARD) monitoring data, as at 2019.
- The National Quality Agenda IT System (NQAITS), as at April 2020.
- The Victorian Child and Adolescent Monitoring System (VCAMS), as at 2018.

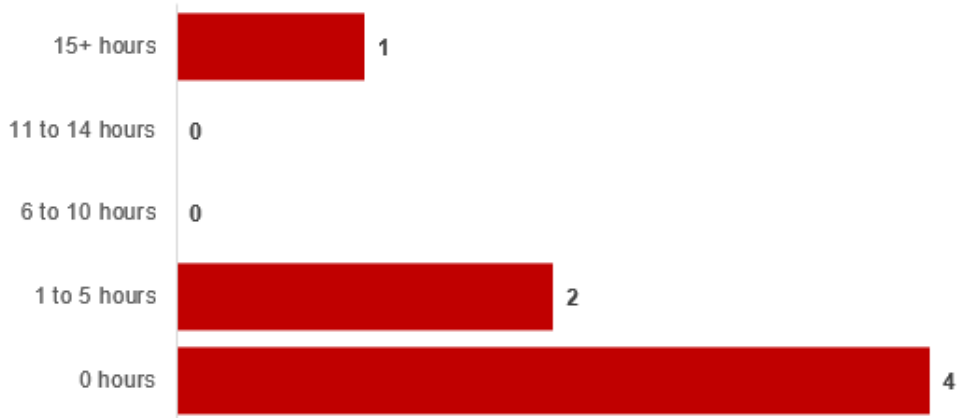
Please note that, because these sources were collected at different points, this may result in slightly different totals appearing in the below data.

Number of services by service type (NQAITs, 2020)	
Stand-alone kindergartens	2
Long day care centres	5

Percentage of services by management type, LGA level (NQAITs, 2020)	
Type	Percentage
Local Government	0%
Private not for profit	67%
Private for profit	0%
Other	33%

Current kindergarten offering	
Four-Year-Old Kindergarten participation rate (VCAMS, 2018):	113%
Number of services that offer a funded kindergarten program (DET, 2019):	7
Number of services that offer an unfunded Three-Year-Old Kindergarten program (DET, 2019):	3

Hours of unfunded 3YO programs currently offered (DET, 2019):



4.4 APPROACH TO OPTIMISING THE USE OF EXISTING SERVICES AND INFRASTRUCTURE

Change management strategies to optimise existing services and infrastructure

Children can often be accommodated through existing spare places and by services ‘unlocking’ unused capacity. As the experience of providers in the 2020 Three-Year-Old Kindergarten roll-out LGAs shows, while the optimisation of existing services can be challenging, it is highly time- and

cost-effective compared to building new capacity through infrastructure projects. It also helps target infrastructure investment to the places that need it most and avoids over-supplying the local market.

The Alpine Shire Council and the Department will support providers and services to maximise their kindergarten places through the following change management activities and practices:

- Increasing the capacity of any Local Government operated services by:
 - Running additional programs.
 - Using different timetables, including running 7.5-hour days.
 - Changing the delivery model, such as introducing rotational models or mixed-age groups.
 - Having degree-qualified kindergarten teachers leading integrated kindergarten programs in long day care settings.
- Encouraging and supporting other providers and services in the LGA to undertake change management.

The Alpine Shire Council and the Department have estimated how many Three and Four-Year-Old Kindergarten places can be accommodated through existing services in the LGA (**Table 1**). Both parties are committed to helping providers and services offer these kindergarten places before progressing to funded infrastructure solutions to meet demand. This commitment is reflected in the LGA and community level estimates below (**Table 2** onwards), which assume that demand will be met first through existing services and second through additional infrastructure. Note that in some cases the number of kindergarten places that can be offered through existing services may exceed demand for kindergarten places.

Table 1: Total estimated funded kindergarten places that can be offered by optimising existing services and infrastructure across the LGA, between 2021-29 (presented in 15-hour equivalent places)

	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025	2026	2027	2028	2029
Estimated existing supply of kindergarten places*	410	410	410	410	410	410	410	410	410

*This may be higher than current three and four-year-old enrolment's as it includes any spare places that are currently available or could be generated by making some minor adjustments to programming approaches.

4.5 AGREED ESTIMATES OF DEMAND FOR FUNDED KINDERGARTEN PLACES THAT CANNOT BE MET THROUGH EXISTING SERVICES AND INFRASTRUCTURE

The below estimates (**Table 2** onwards) have been developed by the Alpine Shire Council and the Department to illustrate the estimated:

1. Total number of Three and Four-Year-Old Kindergarten places expected over the roll-out period.

2. Three and Four-Year-Old Kindergarten places that cannot be accommodated by optimising existing services and infrastructure over the roll-out period.

These estimates have been developed to reflect that the increase in demand for Three-Year-Old Kindergarten places will be gradual.

In estimating how many Three and Four-Year-Old Kindergarten places cannot be accommodated by existing services and infrastructure, the Alpine Shire Council and the Department have taken into account any new places that will be made available through planned expansions of existing services or new services, into estimates of existing supply, where this information is available. This may include Local Government owned services being developed and planned Kindergartens on School Sites.

These estimates do not, however, estimate how and when the broader sector will expand to meet the additional demand for kindergarten places that are estimated over the roll-out period.

Infrastructure need in the LGA and its local communities is indicated by the bottom rows of the tables in this section (**Table 2** onwards): 'Total kindergarten places that cannot be accommodated by existing services'. For example, if the number of kindergarten places for the LGA or a community is above zero in this row, it means that the area is estimated to need additional infrastructure (noting that further optimisation which avoids the need for additional infrastructure may be possible). Any type of provider – Local Government, not-for-profit or for-profit – can build this additional infrastructure. If this row shows all zeros, it means that there is no estimated need for additional infrastructure in the area.

Local Government and not-for-profit kindergarten providers must refer to the estimates in this section when applying through the Building Blocks Capacity Building Grants stream for Government funding. Under this stream, projects must be in a community where there is infrastructure need as shown in the community's table of estimated demand for kindergarten places (i.e. there are numbers in the bottom row above zero). Projects in LGAs or communities where demand can be met through existing services (i.e. the bottom row shows all zeros) are not eligible for funding under this stream.

LGA estimates

Table 2: Total estimated three and four-year-old kindergarten places between 2021-29 (presented in 15-hour equivalent places)

LGA level estimates	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025	2026	2027	2028	2029
Total estimated demand for kindergarten places (three and four-year-old children)	222	230	234	235	235	246	246	246	246
Total kindergarten places that cannot be accommodated by existing services	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

Community estimates

Table 3-4: Total estimated three and four-year-old kindergarten places between 2021-29 (presented in 15-hour equivalent places)

Myrtleford estimates	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025	2026	2027	2028	2029
Total estimated demand for kindergarten places (three and four-year-old children)	76	79	80	81	81	85	85	85	85
Total kindergarten places that cannot be accommodated by existing services	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

Bright – Mount Beauty estimates	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025	2026	2027	2028	2029
Total estimated demand for kindergarten places (three and four-year-old children)	145	151	153	154	153	161	161	161	161
Total kindergarten places that cannot be accommodated by existing services	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

5. AUTHORISATION

The Area Executive Director (Ovens Murray) of the Department of Education and Training and the Chief Executive of Alpine Shire Council endorse this Kindergarten Services and Infrastructure Plan (KISP) for Alpine Shire by signing on 4 / / 2020.

This KISP is not intended to create legal relations or constitute a legally binding contractual agreement between the parties. The parties may review this KISP in 2024 to publish a new version that will replace the previous version.

An out-of-cycle review may be triggered if both parties agree that there has been a change in relevant data, information or the local early childhood sector that significantly affects the reliability of a KISP's estimates for planning purposes.

Signed for and on behalf and with the authority of Alpine Shire Council

Signature  17/12/2020

Witness Signature 

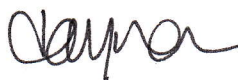
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Signed by Area Executive Director (Ovens Murray), Department of Education and Training

Signature 

Witness Signature 

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