

2010 ANNUAL REPORT ON ACHIEVING UNIVERSAL ACCESS TO EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION IN VICTORIA



Template for Annual Reports

1. PROGRAM TITLE	Universal Access to Early Childhood Education
2. STATE/TERRITORY	Victoria
3. AGENCY	Department of Education and Early Childhood Development
4. DESCRIPTION OF THE PROGRAM	<p>DESCRIPTION OF THE PROGRAM</p> <p>Objectives</p> <p>The Council of Australian Governments (COAG) National Partnership Agreement on Early Childhood Education (NP ECE) was signed in November 2008, with the aim that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • By 2013 every child will have access to a preschool program in the 12 months prior to full-time schooling. • The preschool program is to be delivered by a four year university qualified early childhood teacher, in accordance with a national early years learning framework, for 15 hours a week, 40 weeks a year. Reasonable transitional arrangements—including potentially beyond 2013—are needed to implement the commitment to preschool program delivery by four year university qualified early childhood teachers, as agreed in the bilateral agreements. • The program will be accessible across a diversity of settings, in a form that meets the needs of parents and in a manner that ensures cost does not present a barrier to access. <p>From here on the commitment will be referred to as “universal access”.</p> <p>Victorian context</p> <p>The Commonwealth Government has committed \$970 million over five years for this reform, including \$210.6 million for Victoria.</p> <p>The Department of Education and Early Childhood Development (the Department) is responsible for leading implementation of universal access in Victoria. Victoria’s five year approach to implementation was developed in consultation with key stakeholders and is reflected in table 2 of schedule 1 of the bilateral agreement, signed in</p>

June 2009.

Victoria takes a systematic approach to the provision of universal services, including early childhood education. Kindergarten in Victoria is funded by the State Government for (four year old) children in the year prior to commencing primary school (two years before grade one). The Victorian Government funds early childhood education programs for all children aged four years on or before 30 April in the year of attendance in any setting, including long day care, providing that the program occurs in a licensed facility and the children receive a developmentally appropriate program, planned and delivered by a qualified early childhood teacher for 10 hours per week. From 2011 program hours will increase to 10 hours and 45 minutes per week across all funded kindergarten programs.

The move from 10 to 15 hours per week of kindergarten, a 50 per cent increase in program delivery, will require major sector transformation in Victoria and be dependent on strong leadership and sustainable working partnerships between the State Government, Commonwealth Government, local government, kindergarten cluster managers, stand alone kindergartens, community organisations and private providers.

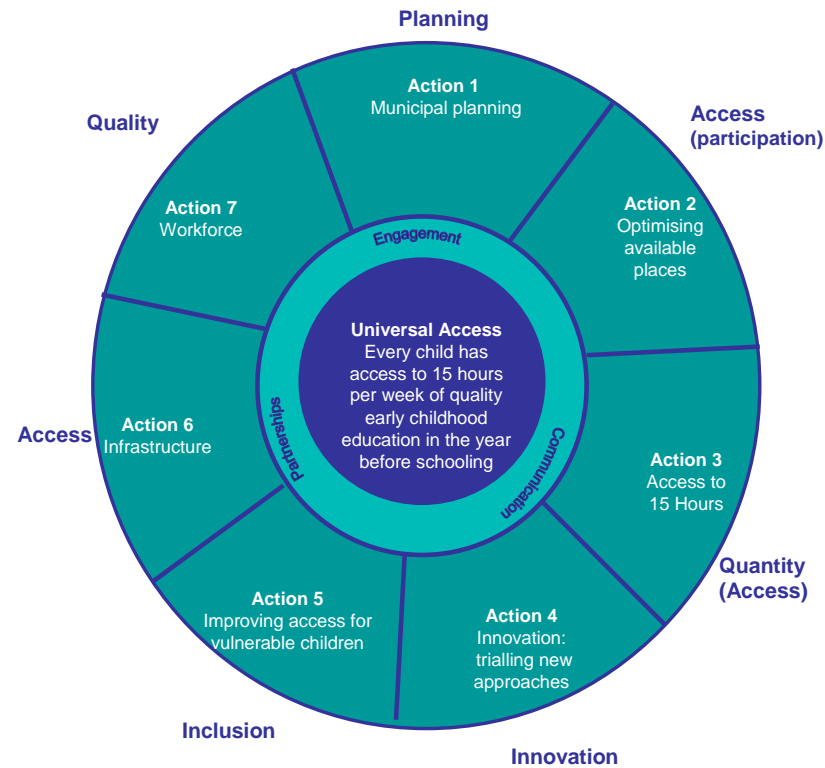
For this reason, deliverables need to be carefully planned in order to support the achievement of universal access by 2013. Local planning, foundational infrastructure, workforce strategies and 15 hour program pilots in the first two years of implementation are required to build sector capacity and provide the basis for increased participation in a 15 hour kindergarten program leading up to 2013.

In summary Victoria's five-year strategy will:

- facilitate detailed planning that responds to the unique needs of different local communities;
- build an evidence base for effective implementation, including trialling and assessing innovative approaches with the Commonwealth;
- identify effective strategies to remove barriers to access, with a particular focus on vulnerable children;
- support new or modernised infrastructure, consistent with the Victorian Children's Capital Program;
- fast-track early childhood education and care workforce reform to improve the overall number of kindergarten teachers and the quality of service delivery in line with the Victorian Early Childhood Workforce Strategy; and
- lift participation and deliver access from the current 10 hour program to a 15 hour kindergarten program.

This translates into seven key areas for action, outlined in Diagram 1. Actions are closely linked and in many instances will be pursued in parallel, rather than sequentially.

Diagram 1



The Victorian Early Childhood Development Advisory Group provides expert advice regarding planning, implementation and evaluation of the achievement of universal access. The advisory group is chaired by the Deputy Secretary, Office for Children and Portfolio Coordination.

<p>5. PROGRAM ACTIVITIES COMMENCED IN THE REPORTING PERIOD</p>	<p>Details of actions which have commenced in the reporting period are outlined in Section 7 of this report and include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Action 3: Access to 15 hours • Action 5: Improving Access to Vulnerable Children • Action 7: Workforce
<p>6. PROGRAM ACTIVITIES COMPLETED</p>	<p>Under Action 1 - Municipal Planning, Capacity Assessment Reports were submitted by all 79 councils by 28 February 2010 and Final Plans were submitted in May 2010. A detailed analysis of the qualitative information provided by councils about the readiness of approximately 2,400 services across Victoria to achieve Universal Access by 2013 was commissioned by the Department in November 2010. Results of the analysis have contributed to Victoria's submission to the 18 month review and will continue to inform the Victoria's implementation of Universal Access. The Capacity Assessment Reports and the analysis have also:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Guided the 2010-11 Children's Capital Program. • Further informed other implementation activities such as Victoria's workforce strategy; <i>Improving Victoria's Early Childhood Workforce: Working to give Victoria's children the best start in life.</i> • Highlighted the extent to which other early childhood services may be displaced by the increase in kindergarten hours for four year old children. • Underpinned the direction of Round 2 pilots which trials 15 hours in settings of high demand and where other early childhood education programs are being delivered. <p>Under Action 6, Infrastructure, a total of \$4.6 million was shared between 23 services in Renovation and Refurbishment Grants (Stage 2 – Universal Access) of up to \$200,000 each to support universal access by enabling community based not-for-profit kindergarten services to increase service capacity.</p>

<p>7. PROGRESS AGAINST:</p> <p><i>The performance indicators set out in the Bilateral Agreement</i></p>	<p>Quantitative information outlining Victoria's performance in relation to the indicative trajectories against the performance indicators specified in the bilateral agreement is provided at <i>Annex 1: Progress by Victoria against Bilateral Indicators - 2010</i>.</p> <p>There has been positive progress against all indicators between 2009 and 2010 and Victoria is tracking above the agreed indicative trajectories for 2010. It should be noted that substantial development of a nationally consistent set of data to report against these indicators is still under development by the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare on behalf of all jurisdictions. Victoria collects data on early childhood services that provide a state funded kindergarten service. Issues regarding data and indicators as reported in the Data Capability Report for 2008 data have not changed.</p>
<p>PROGRESS AGAINST:</p> <p><i>The deliverables set out in the Bilateral Agreement</i></p> <p>Output: <i>Children have universal access to an Early Childhood Education Program for 15 hours per week, 40 weeks per year.</i></p> <p>Performance indicator 1: <i>The proportion of children who are enrolled in (and attending, where possible to measure) an Early Childhood Education (ECE) Program.</i></p> <p><i>ECE in Victoria operates in both stand-alone ECE settings and settings where ECE is integrated with child care. Victoria has a high level of participation (approximately 95 per cent) in ECE/ kindergarten programs. The focus for this</i></p>	<p>Progress against deliverable 1.1: <i>The Victorian Government does not directly deliver kindergarten programs. Local Government is a key planner and deliverer of children's services. Each local govt will develop a foundational plan to implement universal access to a 15 hr kindergarten program for their community. (Action 1)</i></p> <p>Concluding in May 2010, every council worked with their local communities and service providers to assess the capacity of the early childhood education sector to implement increased hours and the challenges to be addressed in their community. A high level Capacity Assessment Report was submitted by each council in February 2010 and a final plan was submitted in May 2010.</p> <p>Councils were asked to engage with all services delivering a funded kindergarten program and all long day care services that do not currently deliver a funded kindergarten program. They were asked to categorise each service in their municipality according to the following categories A-E:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A. Services where universal access (15 hours of kindergarten) is already being delivered. B. Services where universal access can be implemented with some change – and it is possible for the service to make any necessary changes independent of the municipality / other partner(s) (assuming that the additional 5 hours is funded). C. Services where universal access can be implemented with some change – and it is possible for the service to make any necessary changes with assistance from the municipality / other partner(s). D. Services where the implementation of universal access would require significant change that would require external / additional support.

deliverable is to ensure participation can be sustained in the context of this transformational 50 per cent increase in service delivery (from a 10 hr program to a 15 hr program), record recent birth rate growth, recent reform to provide kindergarten for three year old children and factors affecting infrastructure supply.

E. (Only relating to Long Day Care centres not currently offering a funded kindergarten program) Services with no current plans to provide a funded kindergarten program by 2013.

This work culminated in a municipal plan for universal access for each local government area. The plans encompass early childhood education programs for four year old children delivered in a range of settings including stand alone kindergarten services, schools, integrated children's centres and private and community-based long day care centres. These plans identified the impact that the implementation of increased hours may have on the delivery of other programs such as kindergarten or activity groups for three year old children and playgroups.

The Final Plans included:

- Identification of funded kindergarten locations where universal access can be implemented without significant change and where significant change will be required to implement a 15 hour program over time, along with the nature of the change required.
- Information about the future plans of the long day care centres that do not currently offer a funded kindergarten program.
- Information about other early childhood services co-located with funded kindergarten programs and the impact that the implementation of universal access will have on access to space for those programs.
- An assessment of workforce requirements.
- The impact of extending hours on the availability of kindergarten places.
- An overview of the nature and extent of the support required to achieve universal access in each municipality including strategies to support population growth and the participation of vulnerable children.

Progress against deliverable 1.2: *Infrastructure availability will be a substantial challenge for Victoria. Each local govt will establish and implement a planned approach to optimise service and infrastructure use in their LGA, including priority allocation for vulnerable children (Action 2). This action builds on Action 1 and will be sustained until 2013*

In April 2010 all local councils submitted a Capacity Assessment Report to monitor and report on the capacity and progress of services in their municipality towards the implementation of universal access. These reports have provided local government and DEECD regions with information to assist in the forward planning for service and infrastructure use within each local government area.

The Municipal Association of Victoria (MAV) has been resourced to provide support to councils in their municipal planning role.

Work on this action is being undertaken in collaboration with relevant peak bodies including the MAV and Kindergarten Parents Victoria (KPV).

Progress against deliverable 1.3: *Substantial new or modernised infrastructure is required to meet additional demand for services, and in the context of infrastructure supply challenges. Grants will leverage third party funding to deliver integrated services and additional kindergarten capacity (Action 6).*

On 14 July 2010 the former Minister for Children and Early Childhood Development announced that 23 services would share \$4.6 million in Renovation and Refurbishment Grants (Stage 2 – Universal Access) of up to \$200,000 each to support the reform. The grants were available to local councils, community organisations, and private providers involved in the delivery of early childhood education. It is expected that all works will be completed by 2012. A list of services that received the grants can be viewed at:

www.education.vic.gov.au/earlylearning/universalaccess.

The selection process prioritised funded kindergarten programs supporting children at risk of or experiencing disadvantage; services identified in council capacity assessment reports as having a requirement for significant external assistance to achieve universal access (category D); services within Victoria's growth areas; and established kindergarten services with the capacity to expand to include locally relevant integrated children and family services.

Over and above the grants provided through the NPECE, Victoria invested an additional \$19.4 million in 2010-11 for early years infrastructure grants through the Victorian Children's Capital program in October 2010. The Children's Capital Program promoted integrated, inclusive and collaborative early childhood services that provide high quality programs to meet the health, care and educational needs of young children 0-8. The funding included:

- \$9.2 m for 10 capital grants to establish integrated children's centres including kindergarten, long day care, maternal and child health, family and early intervention services.
- \$8.1 million for grants of up to \$200,000 each for 42 not-for-profit kindergartens to upgrade existing facilities. The aim of these grants is to enable increased kindergarten hours for four year old children whilst maintaining other early childhood education and care programs such as kindergarten for three year old children.

Progress against deliverable 1.4: *Victoria proposes to regulate to increase the availability of ECE, by ensuring that an ECE teacher is delivering an ECE program in all long day care centres.*

On 5 October 2010, the Victorian Parliament passed the Education and Care Services National Law Bill 2010, which is now an Act of the Victorian Parliament. The proposed National regulations contain provisions which require centre-based services (excluding services providing education and care to children over preschool age) from 1 January 2014 to:

- i. have access to an early childhood teacher where the service is provided to fewer than 25 children or
- ii. to have an early childhood teacher in attendance at the service for at least 6 hours a day for a service operating 50 hours per week or for 60% of the operating hours of the service if the service operates for fewer than 50 hours per week.

Councils were required to report on all long day care centres as part of their 2010 Capacity Assessment Report, including the number of long day care centres prepared to offer funded kindergarten for four year olds by 2013. In 2010 there were 547 long day care centres delivering a funded kindergarten program, up from 442 in 2009. There were 652 long day care centres not providing a funded kindergarten program in 2010 (DEECD, unpublished).

Over and above activities undertaken with the NPECE funds, the Victorian Government contracted the Centre for Community Child Health (CCCH) in October 2010 to lead a project to address the demand for four year old kindergarten places in Victoria in 2011. CCCH is working in conjunction with nine local councils, kindergarten cluster managers and other service providers to achieve the following objectives:

- Increase the capacity of existing kindergarten providers.
- Increase the number of funded kindergarten programs in the nine identified local government areas, including in long day care centres and school facilities, where appropriate.
- Implement a local communication strategy (including promotional material and media opportunities).

As a result of this project 11 long day care services that have not previously offered a funded kindergarten program have applied for a State funded incentive to employ a teacher, with the intention of offering a kindergarten program once the position is filled.

Progress against deliverable 1.5: *As set out in the National Partnership, the Commonwealth Government will meet the ongoing costs of implementing new approved child care places under child care assistance legislation.*

The Report on Government Services 2011 provides information on the number of centre-based long day care places provided by Australian Government approved child care services. From 2009 to 2010 the number of available centre based long day care places in Victoria grew by nearly 4.5% with 3120 new places created. This followed a 9% growth in places from 2008 to 2009.

Performance indicator 2: *The number of teachers delivering Early Childhood Education Programs who are four year university trained and early childhood qualified.*

Progress against deliverable 2.1: *Develop and implement a comprehensive Workforce Strategy to support universal access to kindergarten that addresses:*

- Recruitment and retention;
- Qualifications and skills; and
- Workforce integration

Substantial increased demand for services will require a focus on attracting or developing new and existing ECE teachers, retaining these teachers, and ensuring teachers are four year trained. Victoria has programs to support pathways into ECE careers and attract new ECE teachers. Consistent with the National Partnership, transitional arrangements beyond 2013 are needed in Victoria to implement the commitment to program delivery by four year university qualified early childhood teachers.

(Action 7)

This strategy will be consistent with the proposed national workforce strategy.

The Victorian Early Childhood Workforce Strategy was launched on 27 November 2009. The strategy supports the development of a workforce that can respond to current challenges in early childhood including universal access. A detailed implementation plan outlines the actions the Victorian Government will take to achieve its vision for the workforce.

The actions align to four goals:

- To attract an adequate supply of qualified early childhood professionals.
- To support a professional workforce committed to developing its knowledge and skills.
- To support the workforce to collaborate across professions and work with families to meet children's needs.
- To enable early childhood professionals to create rewarding careers.

There are a number of actions to specifically support universal access. These are outlined below.

A Qualifications Fund has been made available to support existing staff in children's services to upgrade their qualifications. In 2010, 71 Diploma qualified educators and six primary teachers were awarded scholarships in support of their studies towards an early childhood teaching degree. All scholarship recipients have committed to working in a Victorian licensed children's service on completing their qualification.

To attract an adequate supply of qualified early childhood educators, employment incentives are available to encourage early childhood teachers to work in hard-to-staff locations, including long day care centres without a funded kindergarten program. Since April 2010, the Department has provided incentives of up to \$12,000 for early childhood teachers to work in hard-to-staff centres through the Employment Incentives for Early Childhood Educators scheme. Six teachers have received incentives and a further 17 services have successfully applied to advertise incentives to attract teachers to current vacancies. More information on the available workforce scholarships and incentives can be accessed at: www.education.vic.gov.au/careers/earlychildhood.

In 2010, the indicative trajectory for the number of four year trained and qualified teachers working in Victoria was 850. In 2010, 1149 teachers were delivering early childhood education programs who were four year university trained and early childhood qualified, up from 829 in 2009. The majority of new graduates are now four year trained. The number of early childhood teaching positions held by four year university trained early childhood qualified teachers has increased from 850 to 1179 which is almost a 40 percent increase (*Annex 1: Progress by Victoria against Bilateral Indicators – 2010*). The number of positions held by four year qualified teachers is greater than the number of teachers due to one teacher being able to teach in more than one centre.

Performance indicator 3: Hours per week of attendance (where possible to measure) at an Early Childhood Education Program.

The Victorian Government does not directly deliver kindergarten programs, but provides per capita funding that meets part of the cost of program delivery in both standalone and integrated settings. The remaining cost is met through parent fees and fundraising. For low income families, Victoria provides a subsidy to offset the remaining cost and make kindergarten effectively free. The Commonwealth Government has a responsibility to ensure child care is accessible in a range of settings.

This deliverable focuses on:

- Program pilots and innovation trials in partnership with the Commonwealth Government to establish the policy and delivery supports of a 15 hr program, ensuring these align with the Commonwealth and Victorian Government focus on quality and integration
- Per capita funding to support the increase from 10 hr to 15 hr program delivery expanding each year in line with funding

Progress against deliverable 3.1: Piloting a direct increase in access from 10 to 15 hrs to determine effective and efficient strategies for implementing 15 hrs in a range of settings (incl. stand alone kindergarten and long day care). Pilots will assist in determining an accurate unit price level to support the shift from a 10 hr to a 15 hr kindergarten program drawing on Commonwealth funding, identify different ways to deliver a 15 hr program and inform the 18 month Review. **(Action 3)**

The pilots of 15 hour a week kindergarten programs aim to help develop strategies for how increased hours of kindergarten can be delivered in a range of settings. The evaluation of the pilots will inform the policy and funding criteria for the roll out of 15 hour programs across Victoria. Case studies will be prepared to enable learning to be shared with the wider early childhood sector.

Round 1 Pilots

A total of 20 kindergartens in metropolitan and rural locations were approved as round one pilot sites in May 2010. Each of these services is directly increasing kindergarten program hours to 15 per week. The majority of the round one pilots commenced increased program hours in term 3 and 4, 2010 with the remainder commencing delivery of increased hours in Term 1, 2011. Round one pilots include, in particular, programs supporting groups of children that include a number of children at risk of, or experiencing, disadvantage.

Round 2 Pilots

A further 15 services were announced in October 2010 as round two pilots sites with the majority of these sites to commence increased program hours in Term 1 2011. Round two pilots will address challenges related to the delivery of kindergarten programs in areas of high demand. Each site will provide programs to at least two groups of four year old children while continuing to provide activity groups or kindergarten programs to three year old children.

The Department has engaged Success Works to undertake an evaluation/action research project with the pilots. Success Works will provide progress reports in March 2011 and October 2011 and a Final Report in January 2012.

A list of all the pilots is available at www.education.vic.gov.au/earlylearning/universalaccess.

Progress against deliverable 3.2: Trial innovative models of 15 hr kindergarten program delivery, including wrap-around care through access to the approved Child Care Benefit in standalone kindergartens. These Cwth/ Vic joint trials will provide a national evidence base, available for application in all jurisdictions, for the implementation of universal access in subsequent years of reform. **(Action 4)**

This is a joint deliverable that is the responsibility of the Commonwealth and Victoria. Victoria provided a submission to DEEWR in June 2010 proposing several innovative models for delivering 15 hours of kindergarten. While Victoria is keen to pursue this deliverable DEEWR has not been in a position to engage in

or support the trials to date. DEEWR has advised that this area of work has been significantly delayed and that any trials are subject to Commonwealth Ministerial approval.

Progress against deliverable 3.3: *Raise the per-capita grant to support an increase in the average weekly teaching time by early childhood education teachers.*

Two new industrial agreements for the period 2010-2012 between employer (Kindergarten Parents Victoria and Municipal Association of Victoria) and employee representatives (Australian Education Union and Liquor Hospitality and Miscellaneous Union) contain commitments to implement the COAG (Council of Australian Governments) early childhood initiatives and to work towards provision of 15 hours of kindergarten per week in the year before school, delivered by a qualified teacher.

These new agreements underpin ongoing reform in early childhood education and care in Victoria including supporting the roll-out of universal access to 15 hours of kindergarten by 2013. Annually increasing per-capita grants for funded kindergarten programs are built in over the life of the agreement and an increase in contact hours for full-time kindergarten teachers, from 24 per week to 25.5 hours per week in 2011 will enable all kindergartens in Victoria to progressively move towards the commitment to deliver universal access to 15 hours of kindergarten by 2013.

The new salary and career structure for early childhood teachers and assistants provides parity over the life of the agreement with graduate primary school teachers and will play a significant role in attracting new graduates into the early childhood teaching profession.

For an organisation to be eligible to apply for and receive kindergarten funding, several core criteria must be met including: the service provider must offer each eligible child enrolled at each service location a minimum of 10 hours of funded kindergarten per week. From January 2011, service providers must offer a minimum of 10 hours and 45 minutes per week. Organisations are required to report on this information as part of the data collection process for ongoing funding. Per capita funding provided by the Victorian State Government will increase in line with the increase in the minimum number of hours required.

Progress against deliverable 3.4: *Support 15 hour kindergarten programs, using Commonwealth funding to expand the per capita grant from supporting a 10 hour to a 15 hour kindergarten program. The number of children supported each year will grow in line with funding.*

The outcomes of the pilots and the 18 month review of the NPECE will inform the state-wide roll-out of 15 hours of kindergarten. Refer to *Annex 1: Progress by Victoria against Bilateral Indicators – 2010* for information on the number and proportion of children accessing kindergarten programs provided for 15 hours a week or more.

Victoria has made positive progress on the following indicator from 2009 to 2010;

- The trajectory for 2010 for the average hours per week of early childhood education programs was 12 hours per week; Victoria achieved an average of 16.1 hours, this is an increase from 14.6 hours in 2009.

	<p>The calculation of average hours per week includes kindergarten programs in all settings. Information on funded kindergarten in long day care (LDC) settings outlined in Tables 4 to 7 in <i>Annex 1: Progress by Victoria against Bilateral Indicators – 2010</i> is based on 483 of 547 LDC funded services which were able to provide kindergarten specific hours (compared to 292 of 442 LDC services in 2009). As a result of the Department's ongoing effort to improve the quality of kindergarten data, the inclusion of kindergarten specific hours from more LDC centres in 2010 has been made possible.</p>
<p>Output: <i>Universal access to an Early Childhood Education Program is delivered across a range of settings at a cost which is not a barrier to access.</i></p> <p>Performance Indicator 4: <i>Distribution of children who attend an Early Childhood Education Program by weekly cost per child (after subsidies) as defined by jurisdictions.</i></p> <p><i>Ensuring cost is not a barrier to ECE access is a shared responsibility for State and Commonwealth Governments. Victoria offers a kindergarten fee subsidy, making effectively free a 10 hr kindergarten program for low income families. The extent to which this can be extended to a 15 hr program will need to be determined through pilots and trials. The Commonwealth Government has a responsibility to ensure child care integrated with ECE is affordable, particularly for low income and vulnerable families.</i></p>	<p>Progress against deliverable 4.1 <i>See 3.1 -3.3 above</i></p> <p>Progress against deliverable 4.2: <i>Identify barriers to kindergarten access, particularly vulnerable groups, and implement locally relevant solutions in coordination with home learning and parent support programs. Solutions will include a mechanism for priority allocation of children from vulnerable groups (Action 5). This action builds on Action 2 to plan and optimise service use, including priority allocation for vulnerable children.</i></p> <p>The kindergarten participation rate in Victoria has increased and remained above 90 per cent since the late 1990s. Victoria's 2010 kindergarten participation rate published in the 2011 Report on Government Services (ROGS) was 99.9 per cent; this is an increase of 3.7 per cent since 2009. Over 66,600 children attended kindergarten in Victoria in 2010, up from approx 64,000 in 2009. This is above the 2010 indicative trajectory for Victoria of between 62,000 and 65,000 children. Over 18,200 children (27.4 per cent) received the kindergarten fee subsidy in 2010, effectively providing the year at no cost to parents.</p> <p>The Victorian Government has initiatives in place so that disadvantage is not a barrier to participating in kindergarten and every child has the opportunity to benefit from an early learning and development program before starting school. Final Plans submitted to DEECD by each local council included proposed strategies to increase participation for children experiencing disadvantage. Through NPECE funds, the Department's regional offices have been resourced to work locally with councils and services to ensure that these solutions are implemented and to ensure that they are locally relevant.</p> <p>In addition to this:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Renovation and Refurbishment Grants (Stage 2 - Universal Access) announced on 14 July 2010 prioritised funded kindergarten programs supporting children at risk of or experiencing disadvantage. • Universal access round 1 Pilots are focusing on sites that are supporting children experiencing disadvantage. The pilots include a service offering a family support model supporting vulnerable children and their parents during the additional hours at one pilot location and a small rural service with 80% of families receiving the kindergarten fee subsidy. One quarter of the pilot sites have children attending who receive kindergarten inclusion support packages. • Disadvantage is addressed by providing free kindergarten for eligible children through State Government subsidies. Kindergarten is free for: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Three and four year old Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander children (up to 10 hours per week at no

	<p>cost).</p> <p>o four year old children who hold, or whose families hold a Health Care Card, Pensioner Concession Card, Department of Veterans Affairs' Gold Card, Temporary Protection/Humanitarian Visas 447, 451, 785 and 786, Asylum Seeker Bridging Visas A-F, Refugee and Special Humanitarian Visas 200-217, and triplets/quadruplets in the same year of kindergarten (up to 10 hours per week at no cost).</p> <p>Disadvantage in Victoria is also addressed through a number of targeted state-wide programs through initiatives such as Best Start. The Department now also manages the Victorian Multifunctional Aboriginal Children's service with the aim of increasing the range of services offered from these sites, including kindergarten.</p> <p><i>The Victorian Indigenous Affairs Framework and Balert Boorron: the Victorian Plan for Aboriginal Children and Young People (2010-2020)</i>, both released on 9 August 2010 outlined the following targets for Indigenous children:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase the percentage of Indigenous three-year-old children participating in funded kindergarten programs to 75 percent by 2013. • Close the gap between Indigenous and non-Indigenous four-year-old children participating in funded kindergarten programs by 2013.
<p>Output: <i>Disadvantaged children have universal access to an Early Childhood Education Program.</i></p> <p>Performance indicator 5: <i>The proportion of disadvantaged children enrolled in (and attending, where possible to measure) an Early Childhood Education Program.</i></p> <p><i>Removing barriers to participation in an ECE program is a shared responsibility.</i></p>	<p>Progress against deliverable 5.1 <i>See 4.2 above</i></p> <p>Although there has been an increase in this measure it should be viewed with caution. The trajectory for 2010 for the proportion of disadvantaged children participating in an early childhood education program in Victoria was 91 per cent; Victoria achieved 99.3 per cent, this has increased from 95.1 per cent in 2009. However, the following factors need to be taken into account:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Victoria does not currently collect information on the location of the children's residence, only the location of the service provider. Parents may and do use kindergarten services outside their local area of residence. • The ABS SEIFA IRSED was developed based on the 2006 Census, which may not capture socioeconomic changes at the local area between 2006 and 2010, in particular the growth areas of outer metropolitan Melbourne. • The 2006 ABS POA to SLA Concordances is used to match 2010 kindergarten enrolment data by postcode of service providers to the population by SLA. Inaccuracy and mismatch could occur as: 1) the ABS POA is only an approximation of postcode, and 2) the 2006 POA may not capture some new postcodes developed after 2006 in Victoria. <p>Further detail is provided in <i>Annex 1: Progress by Victoria against the Bilateral Indicators – 2010</i>.</p>

Progress against deliverable 5.2: *Victoria currently offers free three year old kindergarten for children known to child protection and free kindergarten for low income families.*

See 4.2 and Annex 1: *Progress by Victoria against Bilateral Indicators – 2010.*

The Early Start Kindergarten initiatives provide free kindergarten programs for:

- Three year old children known to Child Protection (including those referred directly from Child Protection to Child FIRST)
- Three year old Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children.

In 2010 there were 464 three year old children who benefited from the subsidy provided through the Early Start Kindergarten initiative.

Over 66,600 children attended kindergarten for four year olds in Victoria in 2010, up from approx 64,000 in 2009. Over 18,200 children (27.4 per cent) received the kindergarten fee subsidy in 2010, effectively providing the year at no cost to parents (DEECD, unpublished).

Output: *Indigenous children (including those in Remote Indigenous Communities) Enrolled in and attending an Early Childhood Education Program*

Performance indicator 6: *The proportion of Indigenous children (by geographic location as identified by the Australian Standard Geographic Classification), who are enrolled in (and attending, where possible to measure) an Early Childhood Education Program.*

Removing barriers to indigenous participation in an ECE program is a shared responsibility.

Progress against deliverable 6.1 *See 4.2 above*

The proportion of Indigenous children enrolled in a kindergarten service in the year before school has increased from 69.3 per cent in 2009 to 85.7 per cent in 2010. This is substantially higher than the 2010 indicative trajectory of 65 per cent. (*Annex 1: Progress by Victoria against Bilateral Indicators – 2010*). The above rate is based on the number of Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander children enrolled in a first or second year of kindergarten compared to the projected population of four year old Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander children according to the ABS experimental estimates and projections, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians, 1991 to 2021.

The substantial increase in Indigenous children enrolled in a kindergarten from 2009 (579 children) to 2010 (731 children) may in part be explained by a change in the administration of the Kindergarten Fee Subsidy in 2010 making kindergarten free for all four year old children identified as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander, which may have led to improved identification of Indigenous children. There has also been the creation of Koorie Engagement Support Officer (KESO) positions across Victoria. These are a new professional role that is responsible for delivering support and services to Koorie children and their families through the DEECD regions.

Progress against deliverable 6.2: *Victoria currently offers free three year old kindergarten for aboriginal children and free kindergarten for low income families.*

A total of 259 Aboriginal Children were enrolled in free kindergarten for three year olds in 2010. Over 18,200 children (27.4 per cent) received the kindergarten for four year olds fee subsidy in 2010, effectively providing the program at no cost to parents (DEECD, unpublished).

Progress against deliverable 6.3 *The Commonwealth Government will lead the development of the Indigenous (including remote communities) universal access strategy, with state involvement to ensure relevance to the Victorian context.*

As part of the implementation of universal access Victoria has a particular focus on improving access for Aboriginal children through:

- Municipal planning that has been undertaken by councils. Final plans for each council included proposed strategies to increase participation for children at risk of or experiencing disadvantage
- Renovation and Refurbishment Grants (Stage 2 - Universal Access) prioritised funded kindergarten programs supporting children at risk of or experiencing disadvantage
- Pilots of a direct increase in hours are focusing on sites involving programs supporting a number of Aboriginal children

- Regional support. The Department's regional offices have been resourced to work locally with councils and services to ensure that local solutions to barriers to participation are implemented.

In addition to this, Victoria has reported the following action under the Indigenous Universal Access Strategy key focus areas.

Key Focus Area 1 – Access to Early Childhood Education

- Provision of free access to a kindergarten program for Aboriginal three and four year old children in a variety of settings.
- Employment of Koorie Engagement Support Officers (approximately 100 departmental employees across all DEECD regions) to ensure high level support for individual Koorie children and families, with a particular focus on early years and school-family engagement.
- Enhancing Multifunctional Aboriginal Children's services in Victoria.
- Establishment of two Aboriginal Children and Family Centres under the Indigenous Early Childhood Development National Partnership arrangements.

Key Focus Area 2 – Positive Community Awareness and Engagement

- Six Aboriginal Best Start partnerships have established partnership groups with a range of local service providers, including Aboriginal community controlled organisations and Aboriginal communities.
- A number of non- Aboriginal Best Start Partnerships have developed Aboriginal advisory groups to support the implementation of initiatives in local communities.
- Encouragement of parents and families to participate in local community events including Welcome to Country ceremonies, family days and kindergarten committees.
- Koorie Pre-School Assistants program, providing support for Koorie children, families and kindergartens in designated communities.

Key Focus Area 3 – Quality Early Childhood Programs and Activities

- Implementing the Victorian Government's early childhood workforce strategy including continued investment in scholarships and incentives for Aboriginal early childhood staff and working with the MACS and Aboriginal Children and Family Centres to develop medium term workforce development plans.
- Implementing the Victorian Early Years Learning and Development Framework designed to advance all children's learning and development from birth to eight years by supporting all early childhood professional to work together and with families to support all children to achieve the learning and development outcomes.

	<p>Key Focus Area 4 – Culturally Aware and Sensitive Teachers and Support Staff</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Annual support to all kindergarten services to celebrate National Aboriginal and Islander Children’s Day and Reconciliation Week. • Provision of locally driven cultural awareness activities for staff and children. • Provision of an Aboriginal flag, cultural toys and other resources to all kindergartens.
<p>PROGRESS AGAINST:</p> <p>(ii) The national priorities as outlined in paragraph 18 of the NP ECE</p>	<p>Increasing participation rates, particularly for indigenous and disadvantaged children</p> <p>State Government initiatives provide access to <u>free</u> kindergarten for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Three and four year old Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander children (up to 10 hours per week at no cost). This will increase to up to 10.75 hours per week at no cost in 2011. • Three year old children known to Child Protection (up to five hours per week at no cost). This will increase to up to 10.75 hours per week at no cost in 2011. • Four year old children who hold, or whose families hold a Health Care Card, Pensioner Concession Card, Department of Veterans Affairs’ Gold Card, Temporary Protection/Humanitarian Visas 447, 451, 785 and 786, Asylum Seeker Bridging Visas A-F, Refugee and Special Humanitarian Visas 200-217, and triplets/quadruplets in the same year of kindergarten (up to 10 hours per week at no cost). This will increase to up to 10.75 hours per week at no cost in 2011. <p>The kindergarten participation rate in Victoria has increased and remained above 90 per cent since the late 1990s. Victoria’s 2010 kindergarten participation rate published in the 2011 Report on Government Services was 99.9 per cent (66,651 children). The participation rate is above the 2010 indicative trajectory of 95 per cent of children enrolled in state funded kindergartens.</p> <p>The participation rate for Indigenous children increased from 2009 to 2010 from 69.3 per cent to 85.7 per cent. The indicative trajectory was 65 per cent.</p> <p>The 2010 trajectory for disadvantaged children was 91 per cent; Victoria achieved 99.3 per cent which increased from 95.1 per cent in 2009.</p> <p>The Victorian policy of funding kindergarten programs for all children in any setting including long day care, providing the program occurs in a licensed facility and is delivered by a qualified early childhood teacher is critical to high levels of participation. This is supported by access to free kindergarten for eligible children.</p> <p>Increasing program hours</p> <p>Pilots of a direct increase in hours in the first years of implementation will determine effective and efficient strategies for implementing 15 hours in a range of settings. Thirty-five services are currently piloting a direct increase in hours to 15 hours per week. All services offering a kindergarten program for four year olds in Victoria will be expected to offer a minimum of 10.75 hours per week from 2011.</p>

Ensuring cost is not a barrier to access

Victoria currently provides funding to support the provision of kindergarten services in the form of a per capita subsidy that broadly meets around 65% of the costs of kindergarten. The balance is derived from parent fees and fundraising or through other sources such as local government grants. For around 30% of children attending a kindergarten program each year the Victorian Government provides an annual fee subsidy to make kindergarten effectively free for these children. In 2010 the kindergarten fee subsidy was \$820.

Eligible children include:

- four year old children who hold, or whose families hold a Health Care Card, Pensioner concession card, Department of Veterans Affairs Gold Card, Temporary Protection / Humanitarian visas 447, 481,785 and 786, Asylum Seeker Bridging Visas A-F, Refugee and Special Humanitarian Visas 200-217
- three and four year old Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander children (for up to 10 hours per week)
- three year old children known to Child Protection (for up to 5 hours per week, typically 2-3 hours). Up to 10.75 hours per week in 2011
- four year old triplets/quadruplets in the same year of kindergarten.

The increase in hours from 10 to 15 will require an adjustment to the per capita grant provided to support kindergarten provision, and a review of how the kindergarten fee subsidy functions and operates to offset cost.

The 15 hour pilots currently being undertaken will provide useful input for this work.

Strengthening program quality and consistency

The *Victorian Early Years Learning and Development Framework* (the Victorian Framework) was launched in November 2009. The Victorian Framework advances children's learning and development from birth to eight years by early childhood professionals working together, and with families, to achieve common outcomes for children. The Victorian Framework is for all professionals who work with children from birth to eight years. Shared professional learning opportunities for all early childhood professionals will be provided to support the implementation of the Victorian Framework.

The Victorian Early Childhood Workforce Strategy was launched on 27 November, 2009. The strategy describes a long-term vision for the early childhood workforce. The strategy sets out the short-term and long-term actions Victoria will take to achieve our vision. To attract an adequate supply of qualified early childhood educators employment incentives will be available to encourage early childhood teachers to work in hard-to-staff locations, including long day care centres without a funded kindergarten program.

A Qualifications Fund has been made available to support existing staff in children's services to upgrade

their qualifications, including Diploma qualified staff to undertake an early childhood teaching qualification. A targeted promotional campaign has been undertaken to promote early childhood as a career of choice.

The strategy includes actions to support early childhood educators to develop their skills and knowledge. There will be a focus on developing the leadership capacity in the workforce through the delivery of two customised leadership programs for early childhood professionals. Research into best practice in integrated, collaborative service delivery will inform how to support early childhood professionals to develop the necessary skills to deliver integrated services. Shared professional learning opportunities for all early childhood professionals will also be provided to support the implementation of the Victorian Framework.

On 5 October 2010, as the host jurisdiction, the Victorian Parliament passed the model Education and Care Services National Law Bill 2010, which is now an Act of the Victorian Parliament.

From 1 January 2012, the National Quality Framework (NQF) will introduce a new quality rating system for services, and new national standards that will include more educators to educate and care for children and enhanced educator qualification requirements.

Fostering service integration and coordination across stand-alone preschool and child care

Funded kindergarten programs are delivered in Victoria in a range of settings including long day care centres, community kindergartens, children's hubs and schools. A range of organisations manage these programs including local government, parent committees, schools, churches and private operators and kindergarten cluster managers. Of all funded kindergarten programs provided in Victoria approximately 18 per cent are delivered in long day care services.

The Children's Capital Program 2009/10 and 2010/11 promoted integrated models of early childhood education and care. A key feature of integrated services is that a range of early childhood services are bought together, usually under one roof where practitioners work in a multi-agency way to deliver integrated support to children and families.

The recently revised Victorian Kindergarten Cluster Management Policy Framework emphasises the importance of kindergarten cluster management as a strategy to build a stronger and more responsive kindergarten system in Victoria providing a strong and responsive platform for the implementation of reform in early childhood and care. There are currently 50 kindergarten cluster management providers managing a total of 618 funded kindergarten locations across Victoria, including 25 councils managing 247 locations.

Kindergarten Parents Victoria (KPV) currently receives funding from the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development to provide community-based, funded kindergarten service providers (that operate with committees/boards of management) with a range of advice and support on good governance, service operation and management.

	<p>KPV has also been funded to support stand alone committees over the next three years to enter into kindergarten cluster management arrangements and to establish relationships with existing kindergarten cluster management organisations to enhance service delivery by cluster managed services across the state.</p>
<p>8. A statement of issues of concern that may impact on the achievement of any of the Deliverables</p>	<p>A number of issues and risks were articulated in the bilateral agreement between Victoria and the Commonwealth that will be monitored throughout the implementation of universal access:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The Victorian Government intends to use the opportunity of the 18 month review of the NPECE to seek a commitment from the Commonwealth Government to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adequately fund the additional five hours to achieve the specific outputs and outcomes • invest substantially in necessary infrastructure • enable a longer lead time to train and recruit a suitable workforce and effect the changes required. <p>There are implications for Victoria regarding the adequacy of funding to achieve specified outcomes and outputs and the appropriateness of timelines to achieve universal access.</p> <p>The Victorian Government's submission to the 18 month review also identified that a significant proportion of services will discontinue programs for three year olds as a result of implementing the 15 hours policy.</p> 2. There is a risk that there will not be sufficient suitably qualified staff. <p>Successful implementation will require a systematic and coordinated approach between the Commonwealth and the state to ensuring workforce development takes place at a sufficient rate to support implementation. It will be important that the higher education sector is able to support the supply of early childhood teaching graduates to meet demand. Victoria's Early Childhood Workforce Strategy prioritises actions to improve the overall number of kindergarten teachers and the quality of service delivery.</p>
<p>9. REPORTS</p>	<p>Not applicable</p>
<p>10. DATA CAPABILITY REPORT</p>	<p>There are no exceptions to the Data Capability Report for Victoria.</p> <p>See Annex 1: <i>National Partnership Agreement on Early Childhood Education - Progress by Victoria against Bilateral Indicators – 2010</i> for progress against the Bilateral Agreement indicators.</p>
<p>11. SIGNATURE</p>	<p>Paul Linossier Acting Deputy Secretary Office for Children and Portfolio Coordination</p>

National Partnership Agreement on Early Childhood Education

Progress by Victoria against Bilateral Indicators - 2010

This document reports on the progress of Victoria against the indicators described in the Bilateral Agreement on Achieving Universal Access to Early Childhood Education, noting that substantial development of a nationally consistent set of data to report against these indicators is still under development by the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare on behalf of jurisdictions.

Victoria only collects data on early childhood services that provide a state funded kindergarten service.

Issues regarding data and indicators as reported in the Data Capability Report for 2008 data have not changed.

Notes

The data reported in this progress report was compiled using data from:

- Confirmed Kindergarten Enrolment Form (PF04) for 2010 conducted in April 2010 of all funded service providers, as at September 2010, together with data extracted as at June 30, 2010 from the CHISOL funding system
- Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) unpublished Estimated Resident Population for 2009 (Preliminary) as at December 2010
- 2009 Preliminary Estimated Resident Population, Customised Report Table 1: 2009 Preliminary ERP by Single Year of Age by Sex by Statistical Local Area (SLA) in Victoria Reference period: 30 June 2009
- ABS Socio-Economic Indexes for Areas (SEIFA) Index of Relative Socio-economic Disadvantage
- 3238.0 Experimental Estimates and Projections, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians, 1991 to 2021.

For the purpose of this report two key groupings of services have been identified:

- Long Day Care funded, and
- Other sessional funded services

The makeup of this progress report builds upon the amendments to the Data Capability Report for 2008 as agreed with the Commonwealth Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations (DEEWR). A key aspect of this was the categorisation of data by “management type” of providers of funded kindergarten services which has been incorporated into this report.

Status of data and system developments

Victoria successfully trialled an online web collection of anticipated enrolment data from funded providers in late 2009. Full implementation of the online data collection for the confirmed enrolment data collection (i.e. PF04) occurred in April 2010.

Planning is underway for the online confirmed data collection in April 2011, which will include collection of Unit Record Level (URL) data for enrolled children. This data will then be updated by services in August 2011, and census information will be completed.

Summary table: an overview of the organisations, locations and enrolments, by management type of the organisations

Management Type	Organisations		Locations		Enrolments	
	(n)	(%)	(n)	(%)	(n)	(%)
Community						
Church	12	1.2%	67	3.8%	2316	3.5%
Company Limited by Guarantee	9	0.9%	85	4.8%	2523	3.8%
Co-operative	22	2.1%	25	1.4%	458	0.7%
Government School	24	2.3%	25	1.4%	1136	1.7%
Incorporated Association	578	56.2%	854	48.7%	37349	56.0%
Local Government	34	3.3%	264	15.0%	11957	17.9%
Other	1	0.1%	1	0.1%	10	0.0%
Total Community sector	680	66.1%	1321	75.3%	55749	83.6%
Private						
Company	265	25.8%	329	18.7%	6887	10.3%
Independent School	84	8.2%	105	6.0%	4015	6.0%
Total Private sector	349	33.9%	434	24.7%	10902	16.4%
Total	1029	100.0%	1755	100.0%	66651	100.0%

Definitions of organisation type reported in the table on the previous page

The categories of organisation types below are broadly based upon the legal status of the funded organisation operating the kindergarten services. Organisations self identify their own legal status to the Department and this information is used to compile the table on the previous page.

Church	A religious organisation that may have been established under specific legislation. However, churches may operate other organisations that deliver funded kindergarten services and these other organisation may have been established as an incorporated association.
Co-Operative	A co-operative is an organisation concerned with providing for the needs of its members. The structure enables the individual member to benefit from economies of scale through the combined purchasing, distribution or marketing power or influence of the group.
Catholic School	A school, other than a Government school, that is registered under the relevant education legislation and is operated or affiliated with the Catholic church.
Government School	A "Government school" means a school established by the Minister for Education and conducted under the relevant education legislation.
Incorporated Association	Means a non-profit organisation incorporated under the relevant Associations legislation.
Local Government	The Local Government Act 1989 provides a framework for the establishment and operation of councils and is the main legislative instrument for Victoria's 79 councils.
Limited Company	A company limited by guarantee
Company	A propriety limited company or company limited by share
Natural Person	An individual.
College or University	A post secondary education institution established by an Act of the Parliament of Victoria or under the Australian Catholic University Limited.
Independent School	A school, other than a Government school, that is registered under the relevant education legislation and is not operated or affiliated with the Catholic church.

Organisations that do not match one of the above categories are classified as being "other" and are generally operated by a community organisation.

Indicator 1: The proportion of children who are enrolled in (and attending, where possible to measure) an Early Childhood Education program

Table 1: Number of children enrolled in state funded kindergarten services in the year before school in 2010 by type of service provider

Management Type	Funding Type		Total
	LDC funded	Other	
Community			
Government School	-	1,136	1,136
Local Government	1,155	10,802	11,957
Other ¹	3,923	38,733	42,656
Total Community sector	5,078	50,671	55,749
Private			
Independent School	903	3,112	4,015
Other private ²	6,555	332	6,887
Total Private sector	7,458	3,444	10,902
Total	12,536	54,115	66,651

1. Includes kindergarten services managed by Catholic Schools, Churches, Companies Limited by Guarantee, Incorporated Association, Co-operative organisations, and/or other community organisations (see Definitions of Organisation Type on page 3).
2. Includes kindergarten services managed by Colleges/Universities, Companies and/or Natural persons (see Definitions of Organisation Type on page 3).

Table 2: The proportion of children who are enrolled in (and attending, where possible to measure) an Early Childhood Education program

Based upon the numbers described above in table 1, expressed as a proportion of the population of four year olds, i.e. 66,709, as reported in the Report on Government Services 2011.

Management Type	Funding Type		Total
	LDC funded	Other	
Community			
Government School	0.0%	1.7%	1.7%
Local Government	1.7%	16.2%	17.9%
Other ¹	5.9%	58.1%	64.0%
Total Community sector	7.6%	76.0%	83.6%
Private			
Independent School	1.3%	4.7%	6.0%
Other private ²	9.8%	0.5%	10.3%
Total Private sector	11.2%	5.2%	16.3%
Total	18.8%	81.1%	99.9%

1. Includes kindergarten services managed by Catholic Schools, Churches, Companies Limited by Guarantee, Incorporated Association, Co-operative organisations, and/or other community organisations (see Definitions of Organisation Type on page 3).
2. Includes kindergarten services managed by Colleges/Universities, Companies and/or Natural persons (see Definitions of Organisation Type on page 3).

Indicator 2: The number of teachers delivering Early Childhood Education Programs who are four year university trained and early childhood qualified

As at April 2010, a total of 1149 four year early childhood university trained individual teachers were employed across all state funded kindergarten services.

As a teacher may work across different service providers, a breakdown of the number of individual teachers by service type was not possible. Table 3 below reports teaching positions, not teachers.

Table 3: Number of early childhood teaching positions, held by four year university trained early childhood qualified teachers

Management Type	Funding Type		Total
	LDC funded	Other	
Community			
Government School	-	18	18
Local Government	25	143	168
Other ¹	107	535	642
Total Community sector	132	696	828
Private			
Independent School	21	88	109
Other private ²	232	10	242
Total Private sector	253	98	351
Total	385	794	1,179

1. Includes kindergarten services managed by Catholic Schools, Churches, Companies Limited by Guarantee, Incorporated Association, Co-operative organisations, and/or other community organisations (see Definitions of Organisation Type on page 3).
2. Includes kindergarten services managed by Colleges/Universities, Companies and/or Natural persons (see Definitions of Organisation Type on page 3).

Indicator 3: Hours per week of attendance (where possible to measure) at a Early Childhood Education program

All funded kindergarten services are funded to offer a minimum of 10 hours per week of a kindergarten program. In some cases services were not able to or did not identify the kindergarten specific hours, this is a particular issue for fully integrated kindergarten services operated in LDC funded settings.

The distribution of hours across different service providers is quite varied, with Independent Schools offering close to 27 hours a week and Community Sector providers generally averaging about 12.8 hours per week. This varied distribution skews considerably any whole of sector average on hours and as such averages of hours should be used with caution. In response, a breakdown of the median hours has been included in Table 4 below which is a more representative measure.

Information on funded LDCs in Tables 4 to 7 below are based on 483 of 547 LDC funded services which were able to provide kindergarten specific hours (compared to 292 of 442 LDC services as previously reported for 2009). As a result of the Department's ongoing efforts in improving the quality of kindergarten data, such as the improvements in the questionnaire design in the 2010 collection, the coverage of kindergarten specific hours offered by LDCs for 2010 has been improved.

The baseline position in the bilateral agreement for the proportion of children enrolled in an Early Childhood Education program that is offered for at least 15 hours a week reflects the weekly hours of service offered by state funded kindergarten services in non-LDC funded settings. State funded kindergarten programs in LDC funded settings were excluded. Table 6 below provides the current proportion of children attending a state funded kindergarten program in non-LDC funded settings offered for at least 15 hours per week (6.7 per cent). As data collected on kindergarten specific hours in LDC has improved, the proportion of children enrolled in Early Childhood Education programs offered for at least 15 hours a week in all services, including LDC funded settings has been provided (18.4 per cent). Victoria will measure performance against this indicator by including hours provided in LDC services.

Table 4: Average hours per week of funded kindergarten services

Management Type	Funding Type		Median
	LDC funded ¹	Other ²	
Community			
Government school		10.0	10.0
Local Government	25.0	10.0	10.0
Other	24.0	10.5	11.0
Total Community sector	24.1	10.0	10.5
Private			
Independent School	31.3	25.0	28.5
Other private	28.3	13.0	28.0
Total Private sector	29.5	24.0	28.0
Median	25.0	10.5	11.3
Average (mean) weekly hours			Average
Community sector	23.9	10.9	12.8
Private sector	28.6	22.5	27.1
Average	26.8	11.8	16.1

1. Based on 483 of 547 LDC funded services which were able to provide kindergarten specific hours.

2. Based on 1,205 of 1,208 non-LDC funded services which provided data on weekly hours.

Table 5: Number of children enrolled at a state funded kindergarten service that is offered for at least 15 hours by management type

Management Type	Funding Type		Total
	LDC funded ¹	Other ²	
Community			
Church	15		15
Co-operative	285		285
Government School		26	26
Incorporated Association	1,140	1,197	2,337
Company Limited by Guarantee	582	29	611
Local Government	536	25	561
Other	10		10
Total Community sector	2,568	1,277	3,845
Private			
Company	5,284	148	5,432
Independent School	790	2,219	3,009
Total Private sector	6,074	2,367	8,441
Total	8,642	3,644	12,286

1. Based on 483 of 547 LDC funded services which were able to provide kindergarten specific hours.

2. Based on 1,205 of 1,208 non-LDC funded services which provided data on weekly hours.

Table 6: Proportion of children enrolled in a state funded kindergarten program that is offered for at least 15 hours

The table below identifies the proportion of kindergarten services providing programs of 15 hours or more within each type of organisation, i.e. LDC funded or other.

	Funding Type		All Services
	LDC funded	Other	
No. of children enrolled in services offered for at least 15 hours where hours were identified (Numerator)	8,642	3,644	12,286
No. of all children enrolled (Denominator) ¹	12,536	54,115	66,651
Proportion	68.9%	6.7%	18.4%

1. Includes 1,283 children enrolled in 67 services which were not able to or did not identify the kindergarten specific hours.

Table 7: Proportion* of children enrolled in a state funded kindergarten program that is offered for at least 15 hours by management type

* Based upon the numbers described above in table 5, expressed as a proportion of all children enrolled in all state funded kindergarten programs in 2010, i.e. 66,651 which includes 1,283 enrolments in 67 services where weekly hours not reported.

Management Type	Funding Type		Total
	LDC funded ¹	Other ²	
Community			
Church	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Co-operative	0.4%	0.0%	0.4%
Government School	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Incorporated Association	1.7%	1.8%	3.5%
Company Limited by Guarantee	0.9%	0.0%	0.9%
Local Government	0.8%	0.0%	0.8%
Other	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Total Community sector	3.9%	1.9%	5.8%
Private			
Company	7.9%	0.2%	8.1%
Independent School	1.2%	3.3%	4.5%
Total Private sector	9.1%	3.5%	12.6%
Total	13.0%	5.4%	18.4%

1. Based on 483 of 547 LDC funded services which were able to provide kindergarten specific hours.
2. Based on 1,205 of 1,208 non-LDC funded services which provided data on weekly hours.

Indicator 4: Distribution of children who attend an Early Childhood Education Program by weekly cost per child (after subsidies) as defined by jurisdictions

These measures reflect the average and median across services and not individual children as individual child level data is not collected by Victoria. Impact of Kindergarten Fee Subsidy provided by the Victorian Government to eligible families is not included.

As this table includes information on funded LDCs, in some cases services were not able to or did not identify the kindergarten specific fees charged. Only 73 of the 547 funded LDC kindergarten services were able to provide information on the kindergarten specific fees charged. As such the data on LDC funded services for this indicator should be treated with caution.

Table 8: Average (mean) weekly fees for children enrolled in a kindergarten services in the year before school, excludes impact of Kindergarten Fee Subsidy

Management Type	Funding Type		Average
	LDC funded ¹	Other ²	
Community			
Government School		\$17.49	\$17.49
Local Government	\$24.14	\$16.50	\$16.93
Other	\$43.78	\$21.52	\$22.15
Total community sector	\$37.06	\$20.43	\$20.98
Private			
Independent School	\$239.47	\$202.00	\$205.62
Other private	\$144.57	\$91.36	\$129.79
Total private sector	\$168.97	\$190.23	\$184.46
Average	\$100.31	\$33.71	\$37.52

1. Based on 73 LDC funded services for which kindergarten specific fee data available.

2. Based on fees at 1,202 of 1,208 non-LDC funded services where fees data available.

Table 9: Median weekly fees for children enrolled in a kindergarten services in the year before school, excludes impact of Kindergarten Fee Subsidy

Management Type	Funding Type		
	LDC funded ¹	Other ²	Median
Community			
Government School		\$16.30	\$16.30
Local Government	\$16.93	\$16.54	\$16.54
Other	\$21.73	\$19.26	\$19.26
Total community sector	\$19.51	\$18.02	\$18.02
Private			
Independent School	\$293.83	\$235.96	\$239.01
Other private	\$137.50	\$70.12	\$103.15
Total private sector	\$165.00	\$216.99	\$203.26
Median	\$26.96	\$18.77	\$18.77

1. Based on 73 of 547 LDC funded services for which kindergarten specific fee data available.

2. Based on fees of 1,202 of 1,208 non-LDC funded services where fees data available.

Indicator 5: The proportion of disadvantaged children enrolled in an Early Childhood Education Program

Data for this indicator is calculated using the 2006 ABS SEIFA Index of Relative Socio-economic Disadvantage (IRSED) (ABS Cat. 2033.0.55.001) and the 2006 ABS Postal Area (POA) to Statistical Local Areas (SLA) Concordances (ABS Cat. 2905.0.55.001).

This measure must be treated with some caution as it could be misleading as a result of the following factors:

- Victoria does not currently collect information on the location of the children's residence and only the location of the service provider. Parents may and do use kindergarten services outside their local residence.
- The ABS SEIFA IRSED was developed based on the 2006 Census, which may not capture socioeconomic changes at the local areas between 2006 and 2010, in particular the growth areas of outer metropolitan Melbourne.
- The 2006 ABS POA to SLA Concordances is used to match 2010 kindergarten enrolment data by postcode of service providers to the population by SLA. Inaccuracy and mismatch could occur as: 1) the ABS POA is only an approximation of postcode, and 2) the 2006 POA may not capture some new postcodes developed after 2006 in Victoria.

Table 10: The proportion of disadvantaged children enrolled in an Early Childhood Education Program

Numerator	12,316 (Number of children enrolled in state funded kindergarten in the year before school in services located in 20% most disadvantaged SLAs as measured by the ABS SEIFA Index of Relative Socio-economic Disadvantage 2006 (ABS cat.2033.0.55.001))
Denominator	12,400 (Population of 3year olds in 2009 (ABS ERP, June 2009, cat. 3235.0) as a proxy of 4 year old population for 2010 in 20% most disadvantaged SLAs as measured by the ABS SEIFA IRSED)
Proportion (%)	99.3% (calculated using 2010 enrolment data, 2009 ABS ERP data and 2006 ABS SEIFA IRSED)

Breakdown by funding type and community/private breakdown for the lowest 20% of SLAs using the ABS SEIFA IRSD measure not currently available.

Indicator 6: The proportion of Indigenous children who are enrolled in an Early Childhood Education program

This indicator measures the proportion of indigenous children who participated in a state funded kindergarten service in the year before school in 2010.

It is recognised that there is no current accurate annual measure of the population of indigenous children. The 2010 indigenous four year old population in Victoria (853) used to calculate the proportion for this indicator is sourced from the ABS Experimental Estimates and Projections, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians, 1991 to 2021 (Cat. 3238.0, series B).

Table 11: Number of indigenous children enrolled in a kindergarten services in the year before school

Management Type	Funding Type		Total
	LDC funded	Other	
Community			
Government School		10	10
Local Government	9	112	121
Other community ¹	23	556	579
Total Community sector	32	678	710
Private			
Independent School	1	6	7
Other private ²	14	-	14
Total Private sector	15	6	21
Total	47	684	731

1. Includes kindergarten services managed by Catholic Schools, Churches, Companies Limited by Guarantee, Incorporated Association, Co-operative organisations, and/or other community organisations (see Definitions of Organisation Type on page 3).
2. Includes kindergarten services managed by Colleges/Universities, Companies and/or Natural persons (see Definitions of Organisation Type on page 3).

Table 12: Proportion of indigenous children enrolled in a kindergarten services in the year before school by management type

Management Type	Funding Type		
	LDC funded	Other	Total
Community			
Government School	0.0%	1.2%	1.2%
Local Government	1.1%	13.1%	14.2%
Other community ¹	2.7%	65.2%	67.9%
Total Community sector	3.8%	79.5%	83.2%
Private			
Independent School	0.1%	0.7%	0.8%
Other private ²	1.6%	0.0%	1.6%
Total Private sector	1.8%	0.7%	2.5%
Total	5.5%	80.2%	85.7%

1. Includes kindergarten services managed by Catholic Schools, Churches, Companies Limited by Guarantee, Incorporated Association, Co-operative organisations, and/or other community organisations (see Definitions of Organisation Type on page 3).
2. Includes kindergarten services managed by Colleges/Universities, Companies and/or Natural persons (see Definitions of Organisation Type on page 3).