

Let's Talk about Warby Project

Supporting families with young children in
the Warburton area

May 2017

Findings from a community
and service consultation about
what would help families in the
Warburton to Reefton area to raise
their young children





We respectfully acknowledge the Traditional Owners the Wurundjeri People as the Custodians of the land and pay our respect to all Aboriginal Community Elders past or present, who have resided in the area and have been an integral part of the history of the region.

Foreword – Cr Jim Child

It is my pleasure to introduce the *Let's Talk about Warby* Project Report, which I believe will play a significant role in enabling positive change in the Upper Yarra area.

The *Let's Talk about Warby* project has been a significant piece of work led by Council's Family & Community Support Services. As set out in the Child and Youth Strategy (YRCYS 2012-24), Council is committed to ensuring that "Yarra Ranges will be a place where every child and young person will be able to thrive, reach their potential and actively participate in decision making."

While the majority of children growing up in the Upper Yarra are thriving and developing well, the available data and community feedback has identified that the developmental outcomes for a significant minority are not as strong as we would wish.

Consequently, Council has undertaken this community consultation with the Warburton-Reefton community from October 2015 – May 2016, which will now play an important role in guiding the future activity of Council and other agencies to enable more families with children (aged 0-5 years) in the Warburton- Reefton and broader Upper Yarra area to thrive.

While Council has been aware of the issues affecting families living in the Upper Yarra and is working to address these, this report provides a much more detailed picture of the experiences of families and what they need to help them raise their children. Many families are attracted to the area because of the natural beauty and appeal of smaller townships, however there can be challenges for accessing and participating in services.

Projects such as this actively engage the community and play a crucial role not just in setting future priorities but also creating community and service partnerships that enable action and innovation. The Project's recommendations outline a way forward and provide a foundation from which Council can partner with schools, services, community and tiers of government to make a real difference for families and children.

This project is a demonstration of Council's commitment to achieving the outcomes outlined in the Child and Youth Strategy and I look forward to seeing actions emerge that make a positive difference to the lives of young children.

Cr Jim Child - O'Shannassy

"Yarra Ranges will be a place where every child and young person will be able to thrive, reach their potential and actively participate in decision making."

Acknowledgements

The Let's Talk about Warby Project was planned and implemented by staff in the Early Years Development Team at Yarra Ranges Council, including;

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Acknowledgement to the;

Warburton to Reefton families who provided invaluable information and insight into what services and supports families want and need to help raise their children.

The Upper Yarra service providers, who shared their professional experience of working with vulnerable families and presented ideas for improved service delivery.

This report would not have been possible without the contributions from all of these people.

Our thanks to you all



Yarra Ranges Council Project Team at Reefton Community Event

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1. Introduction

Yarra Ranges Council has had a long term commitment for improving outcomes for children 0 - 5 year olds in the Upper Yarra and for some years has supported a number of community early intervention programs, including the State Government's Best Start program¹ and more recently the Linking Learning Project².

While the majority of children are thriving, the Upper Yarra area is known as an area where outcomes for children are poorer compared to other areas in the Outer Eastern metropolitan region. Data specifically for the Warburton – Reefton area shows that, 28.6% compared to 16.8% for Yarra Ranges of prep aged children starting school in 2012 had developmental vulnerabilities in one or more domains. While this translates to small numbers of children (approximately 16, AEDC -2012 data), there is nonetheless a detrimental long term and cumulative effect on the individual and community.

It is this situation coupled with the growing body of research that also shows the best way for improving children's outcomes, is a positive home learning environment as well as access to quality support services, that Council decided to commence a more focused effort in the Warburton – Reefton area through a project that aimed to "Significantly improve the developmental outcomes, for vulnerable children 0-5 years growing up in the Warburton area by 2019, to a level similar to the Yarra Ranges average." (Project Action Plan).

In October 2015 the first stage of the Upper Yarra Engagement Project commenced with an extensive consultative research project called Let's Talk about Warby, undertaken from October 2015 – April 2016. Through the

employment of a Project Worker it's purpose was to identify vulnerable families in Warburton with 0 - 5 year olds, who are not accessing services and through community and individual consultation, determine how best to connect and support families into services.

Interviews focused on seeking information from parent/carers with young children on what services or support families want or need to help raise their young children. It also included a range of health, education and key early years service provider interviews to understand the issues and obstacles from a service delivery level.

This report provides an overview of the above consultation process and findings. The development of recommendations provides guidance and direction for stage two of the Project, which will see the activation of key priorities and partnerships, to make a positive difference for children's outcomes in the area.

For the purposes of this report, vulnerability can refer to;

"A broad range of factors that may prevent children from reaching their potential – for example, children in Out of Home Care or at risk of abuse or neglect, newly arrived migrants/refugees, children with a disability or developmental delay, isolated and rural communities, transient populations and areas of entrenched disadvantage."³

Increasingly however, it is recognized that all families may experience vulnerability at some time, particularly where there are issues related to mental health, homelessness, drug or alcohol abuse or stressful life events (Greater Shepparton Child & Family Vulnerability Guide Tool Kit).

¹ <http://www.education.vic.gov.au/about/programs/health/Pages/beststart.aspx>

² <http://www.yarraranges.vic.gov.au/Community/Family-children/Support-for-families/Linking-Learning Reward-Program>

³ Department of Education Best Start Policy and Guidelines.

2. Project Objectives

The first stage of the project set out the following objectives;

- 1** Through service mapping, consultation and data analysis develop a deeper understanding of the opportunities for improving outcomes for children, including identifying accurately from the community's perspective what prevents and conversely supports children reaching their full potential.
- 2** Through a “co-design” plan, set up thorough service and parental engagement and leadership processes to develop a suite of community identified strategies that will directly impact on the identified issues.
- 3** Test the above and other identified evidenced based strategies, to gain community ownership and buy-in.
- 4** Identify potential future strategies and partnerships, to maximize existing and new opportunities for action.
- 5** Establish implementation and evaluation processes, ensuring ongoing involvement of parent and service leaders.

3. Why Warburton?

Yarra Ranges is an area that overall has low levels of socioeconomic disadvantage and where generally children are thriving. However, data shows that there are pockets of geographic areas where families are struggling more than others and outcomes are poorer. The Australian Early Development Census longitudinal research indicates that compared to Victoria or the Eastern Region, these areas have children who are starting prep with developmental vulnerability and small numbers who are struggling at school.

This pattern is reflected in the Upper Yarra area, where socio economic prosperity of residents across the area is diverse, which includes some of the most advantaged and disadvantaged communities. The Warburton to Reefton area has an average SEIFA (Socio-Economic Index for Area) disadvantage score of 933, with McMahons Creek/Reefton SEIFA score 846.⁴ The median average weekly household income for Warburton is \$780, (compared to \$1,216 across Victoria), East Warburton is \$897 and McMahons Creek is \$668. There are a larger proportion of rental payments less than \$150 week, compared to the Eastern Metropolitan Region. See Appendix 10 for more information about Warburton demographic data.

Research undertaken as part of the Yarra Ranges Child and Youth Strategy 2014-2024 identified that access to services and support is more challenging in these communities. The costs of living - travel, food and services are higher and options for support more limited. This creates additional difficulties, particularly when some families are coping with a low income and/or challenging circumstances.

State Government schools and some independent schools complete the Australian Early Development Census (AEDC) every three

years. AEDC Data is based on where the child lives and records the growth and development of prep aged children and provides an indicator of where children would benefit from more assistance, prior to starting school.

The picture shown by the AEDC creates both complexities and opportunities for this and other placed based planning projects. Between 2012 and 2015, the data for the Warburton/Reefton (see Figure 1) showed an improvement in terms of vulnerabilities in specific domains (particularly for physical, social and emotional maturity). However, while there was a significant improvement in some developmental domains, it was not sufficient across other domains to revise the focus on the Warburton/Reefton area.

While Warburton children have shown progress in some domains, data related to neighbouring Millgrove/Wesburn for the same period have shown the opposite. In these areas, the shift from 2012 – 2015 has indicated that children's developmental vulnerability have worsened across most domains. This has implications for the next stage of this project and point to a need for a focused effort in this area, which has been acknowledged in the Recommendations section of the report.

“While Warburton children have shown progress in some domains, data related to neighbouring Millgrove/Wesburn for the same period have shown the opposite.”

⁴ The SEIFA is an index that rates suburbs from lowest (shown by higher numbers) to highest (shown by lower numbers) relative disadvantage.

Australian Early Development Census Warburton/ Reefton area

	2012	2015	2012	2015	2012	2015	2012	2015
% of Vulnerability	Victoria		Yarra Ranges		Warburton & Reefton Area		Millgrove / Wesburn	
Physical health and wellbeing	7.8	7.9	6.1	6.3	22.9	4.2	6.9	32.1
Social competence	8.1	8.7	7	8.3	11.4	8.3	3.4	25.0
Emotional maturity	7.2	8.0	7.6	8.3	14.3	4.2	6.9	25.0
Language and cognitive skills	6.1	6.3	4.4	5.7	8.6	12.5	3.4	28.6
Communication skills and general knowledge	8	7.6	5.9	4.6	11.4	16.7	0.0	25.0
Vulnerable > 1 domain	19.5	19.0	16.8	17.1	28.6	16.7	17.2	3.4
Vulnerable on 2 or more	9.5	9.9	7.6	8.8	17.1	12.5	42.9	32.1

Figure 1. Data from 2012 and 2015 Australian Early Development Census for Victoria, Yarra Ranges and Warburton

4. The Warburton Area

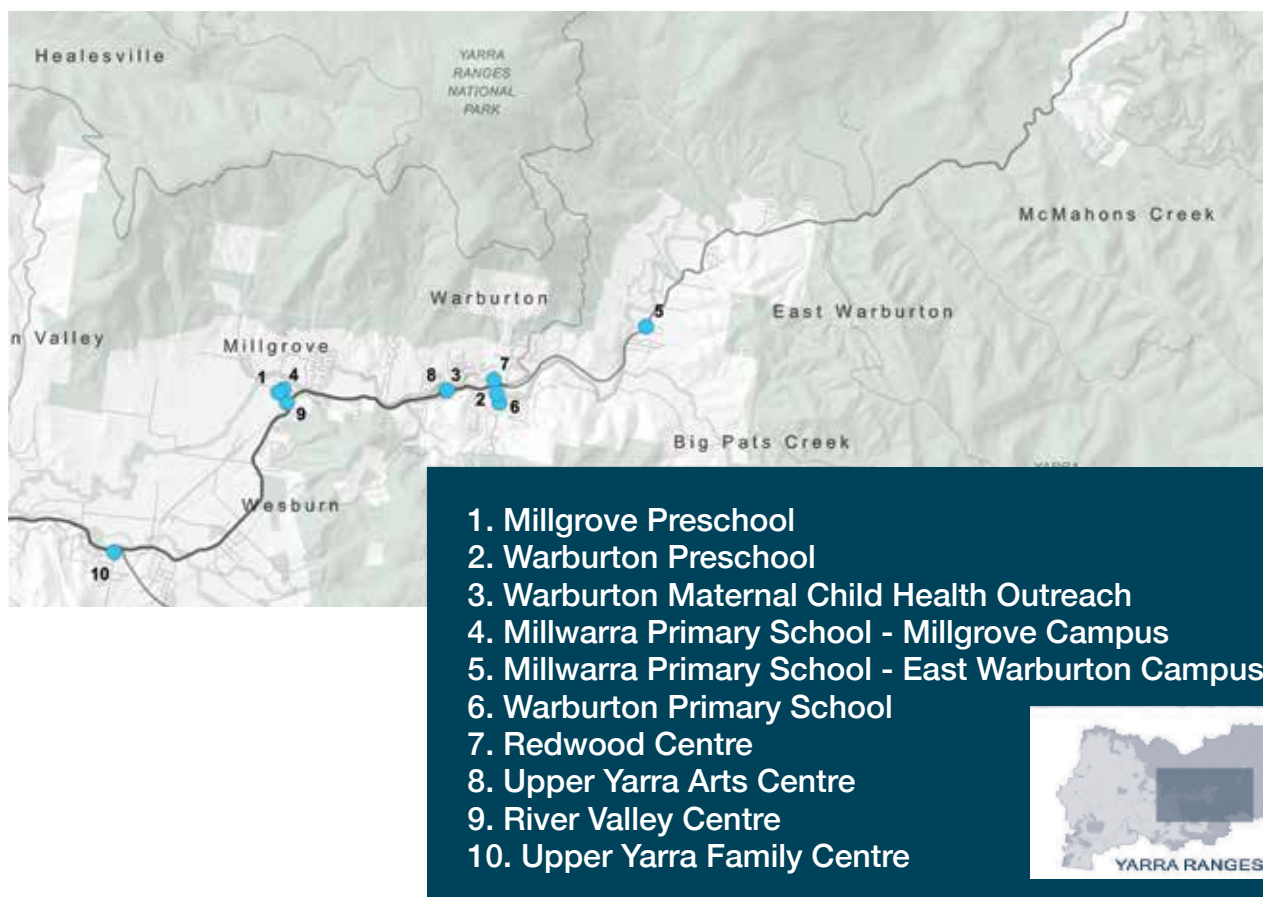


Figure 2. Map of the Warburton Area with Schools and Services

The Warburton region is in the Yarra Ranges municipality and in an area referred to as the Upper Yarra. The communities of Warburton and Reefton are in the most geographically isolated areas of the Yarra Ranges and the outer eastern suburbs of Melbourne. See Figure 2. Warburton is 76 kms east of Melbourne and it takes approximately two hours to travel by public transport to the CBD.

Warburton is located in a picturesque setting on a narrow section of the Yarra Valley at the foot of Mount Donna Buang. The township is nestled in a primarily rural area that remains heavily forested with a few agricultural clearings. The Warburton area has developed as a significant tourist destination for Melbourne residents, with the mountain views and the Yarra River meandering through the township.

The settlements of Warburton East, Big Pats Creek, McMahon's Creek and Reefton extend beyond Warburton along the Woods Point Road, with Reefton located approximately 90 km from Melbourne. The townships are relatively isolated, surrounded by forest, which is protected as part of the Yarra Ranges National Park.

At 1200 metres, Mount Donna Buang is a 20 minute drive from Warburton and it is the closest snow field to Melbourne. During the winter months snow-play activities take place, with bushwalkers visiting in the warmer months. The townships of Warburton and Warburton East are surrounded by old growth native forests dominated by the majestic Mountain Ash and Myrtle Beech. Due to its significant size the Forest supports a large range of fauna, such as the swamp wallabies, wombats,

platypus, echidnas and several species of possums and gliders. It is also a significant habitat for birds including the Powerful Owl, Sooty Owl and the Superb Lyrebird.

Warburton is a service centre for the surrounding smaller townships. The town has a range of small businesses, with many of these catering for the tourist and visitors. Scattered around Warburton are many B&B businesses catering for tourists. The only retail or commercial business after Warburton is the popular Reefton Hotel. First licensed in 1886, the hotel is the sole remaining structure since the gold rush in the area. The Hotel is a popular destination for motorbike riders.

There are a range of community facilities and services in Warburton that meet the day-to-day needs of the community. These include a kindergarten, primary school, not-for-profit community service and recreational facilities. For more specialist services residents need to travel to Yarra Junction, Lilydale and beyond. The town offers a range of hospitality and entertainment services/businesses. The Upper Yarra Arts Centre is an important arts and culture hub. The Centre offers a range of films, theatre productions and workshops.

Drawn to the area's natural beauty, the Upper Yarra area has historically attracted those

committed to an alternative lifestyle, ecology and sustainability. Organisations established in the area for many years, appeal to families with broad perspectives and contribute to the character of the community. Subsequently, there are some diverse attitudes towards prevailing approaches in health and education, which impact on mainstream schools /service utilization rates and service planning.

The Warburton Rail Trail, which is well liked by cyclists, walkers and horse riders, ends in Warburton, with its increased popularity adding to the local economy. Once at Warburton visitors have a range of sites to admire close to town, including the Waterwheel, the Warburton Bridges and the River Walk.

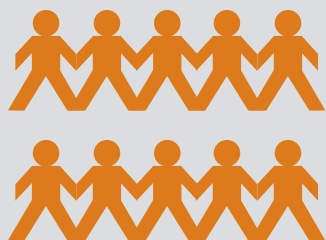
Warburton East is the last stop on the Warburton to Lilydale and Chirnside Park bus service (route number 683). It connects local residents to the retail precincts and the Lilydale train station. The Warburton to Lilydale service runs hourly every day between 6am and 9pm, with a half hourly service in peak times from Monday to Friday. Warburton, Warburton East, Reefton and McMahons Creek are outside the Metropolitan Taxi Boundary. There are several taxis in operation in the area outside the Metropolitan Taxi Boundary, but few are servicing the Upper Yarra district.

2011 Data from the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS)

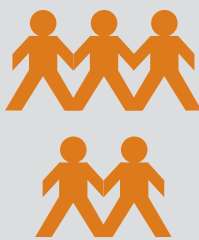
PEOPLE

The ABS data shows there are a total of 3,278 residents in the Warburton /Reefton area

Warburton
2,171



Warburton East
887



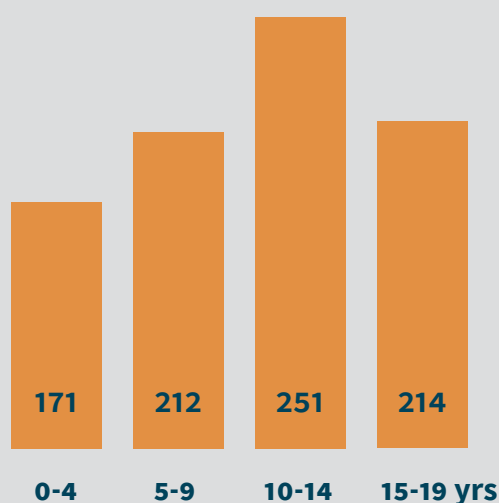
**McMahons Creek
/ Reefton**
220



2011 Data from the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS)

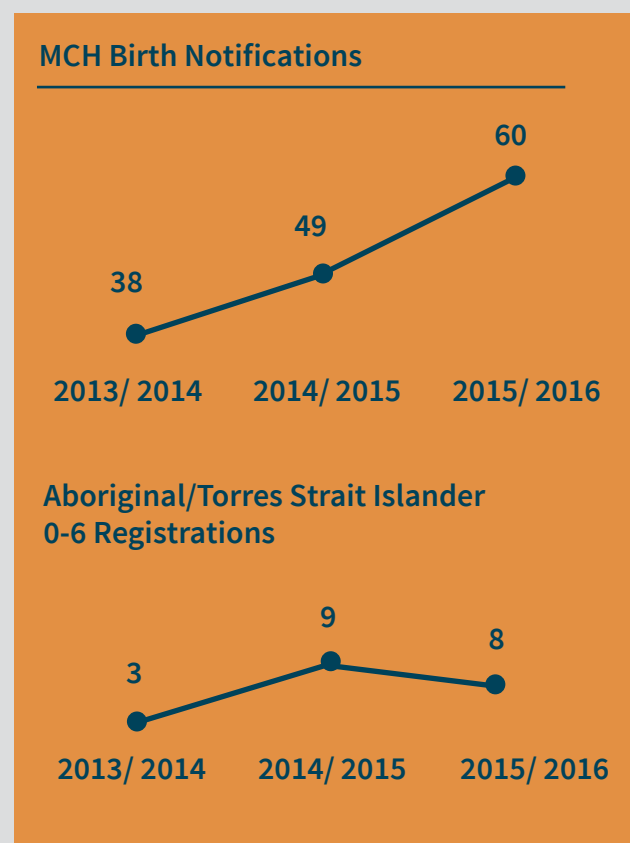
Age of population

The median age of people in Warburton, East Warburton and McMahon's Creek/Reefton was 42.3 years. Children aged 0-14 years made up 18.7% of the population.



There were varied populations of people aged 65 years and over, with 17.4% in Warburton, 13% in East Warburton and 8.6% in McMahon's Creek. There were 29 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, with median age of 40 years (East Warburton), 53 years (Warburton) and 12 years (McMahon's Creek).

The table below shows birth notices for the Warburton Maternal and Child Health Centre (MCH) over the last three years and shows that overall there will be an increase in population likely for 0-4 year olds over the next few years. This MCH centre sees families from the Warburton, Millgrove and surrounding areas.



Family composition in the Warburton area

In the Warburton area (Warburton, East Warburton and McMahon's Creek), there are 869 families, with an average of 1.9 children per family. Couple families with children represent 35% of the general family population in the Warburton area. This is lower than the state average of 46%. There are more female than male single parent households in the Warburton area. However, there is a significant increase in the percentage of single male parents in East Warburton (24%) and the outlying townships of McMahon's Creek (31%), compared with Warburton (15.7%) and the state average (17%). See Figure 3 and 4.

Warburton Area Family Composition

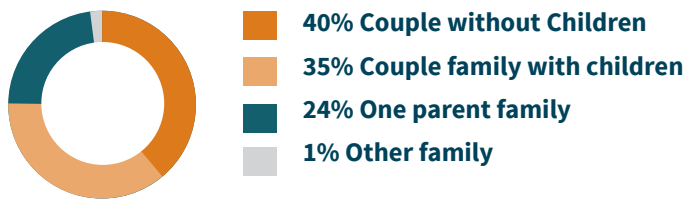


Figure 3. Family Composition. Warburton Area (Average Combined townships)

Warburton Single Parents

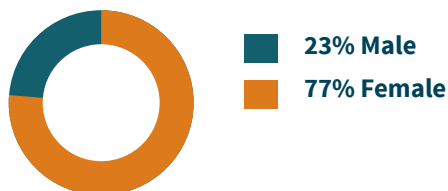


Figure 4. Single Parents Warburton Area (Average Combined townships)

5. Project Methodology

ENGAGEMENT PROCESS

A co-design approach was used with the community consultation and service provider interviews. As common themes emerged during community engagement and service provider interviews, this information was displayed at community events and/or service provider meetings and also shared with participants. This process provided an opportunity to test the information gathered and involve the community and service stakeholders in the design of early years services.

PARENT/CARER SURVEYS

Parent/carers from the Upper Yarra area were randomly selected and surveyed primarily through three data collection techniques. In total there were 152 parents/carers surveyed, through face-to-face surveys during local events and support programs (78), a free “Family Fun Night” Community Event (35) and an online Survey Monkey (39) (for a detailed list see Appendix 1).

SERVICE PROVIDER SURVEYS

There were 73 service providers from 56 services interviewed, including government agencies, non-government organisations and community groups (see Appendix 2)

6. Project Limitations

Like most research this Project does have some limitations. As noted in the methodology, a significant proportion of the research was based on qualitative data gathered through interviews and surveys. It is important to understand that this data represents individual views or perspectives. Furthermore, whilst all efforts are made to provide a broad range of participative opportunities, obtaining a true representative sample is challenging and therefore the project may have missed a proportion of individuals. As a participative action research project, ongoing opportunities to validate the key results will occur through ongoing community engagement and conversations.



Poster Advertising The Project Street Talk

7. Parents / Carer Survey Results

A thematic analysis of the qualitative survey data was carried out for each question. Common themes were identified and collated. The on-line Survey Monkey data was included for five of the survey questions. The results show the percentage of survey responses for each theme, relevant to the individual question.

DEMOGRAPHICS

Results show more than 50% of survey respondents were from Warburton, with 31% from East Warburton and McMahons Creek/Reefton area and 12% from surrounding suburbs. See Figure 5. Most of the online respondents were aged 35-44 years (48%), 25-34 years (27%), 45-54 years (17%) and 55-64 years (7%).

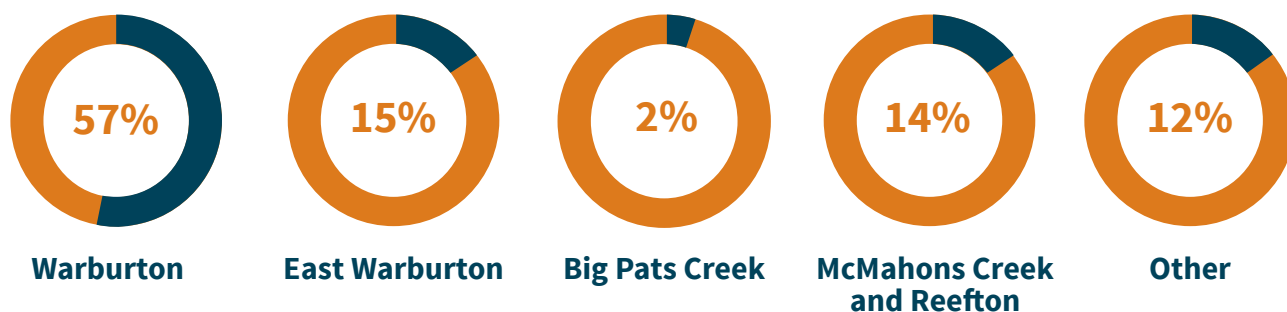


Figure 5. Where parents/carers live

Transport in the Upper Yarra area is paramount, with the majority of families having at least 1 car. See Figure 6.

Families surveyed have 1-2 children on average and a small proportion of families have three generations living together. See Figure 7.

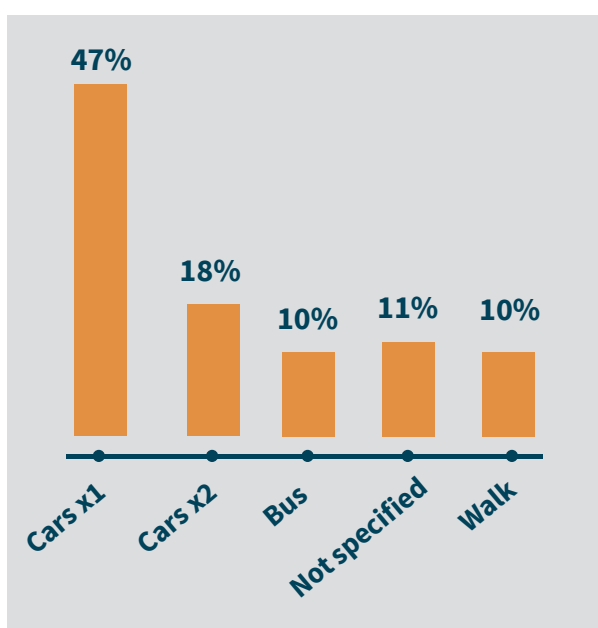


Figure 6. Type of transport parents/carers use

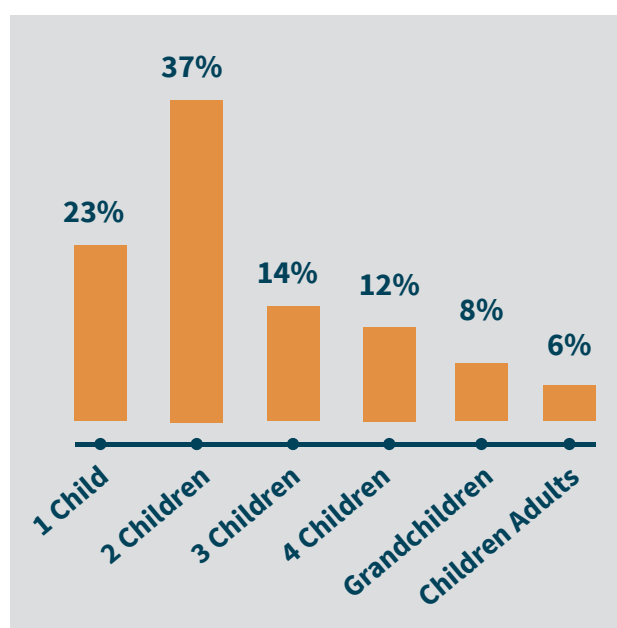


Figure 7. Number of children in families

DIVERSITY

Other demographics collected from the on-line data, showed 3% of online respondents have a child from Aboriginal or Torres Strait descent. Of all the on-line respondents, 7% spoke another language other than English at home and 7% of both parents and children speak another language.

7.1 Services parents/carers use if they or their children need support

The majority of survey responses (26%) identified the general practitioner (GP) as the service they access if they need support for themselves and/or their children. There were also 26% of responses stating they obtain support from family, friends and neighbours. See Figure 8.

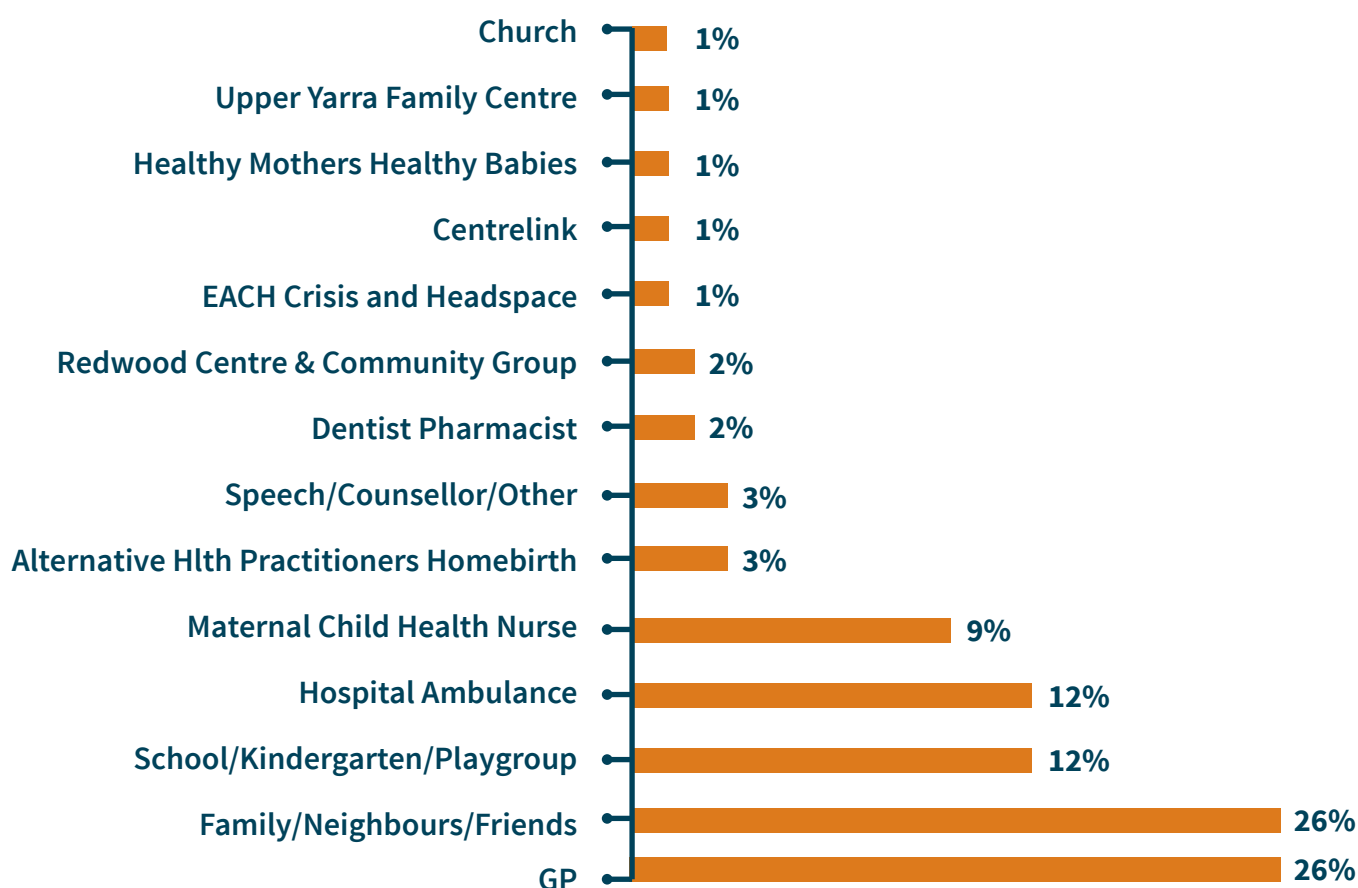


Figure 8. Services parents/carers use if they or their children need support

7.2 Early Years Services and supports parent/carers have attended

More than half of the survey responses show parents/carers have accessed at some point early years services, such as playgroup (20%), kindergarten (18%) and Maternal Child Health service (16%). See Figure 9.

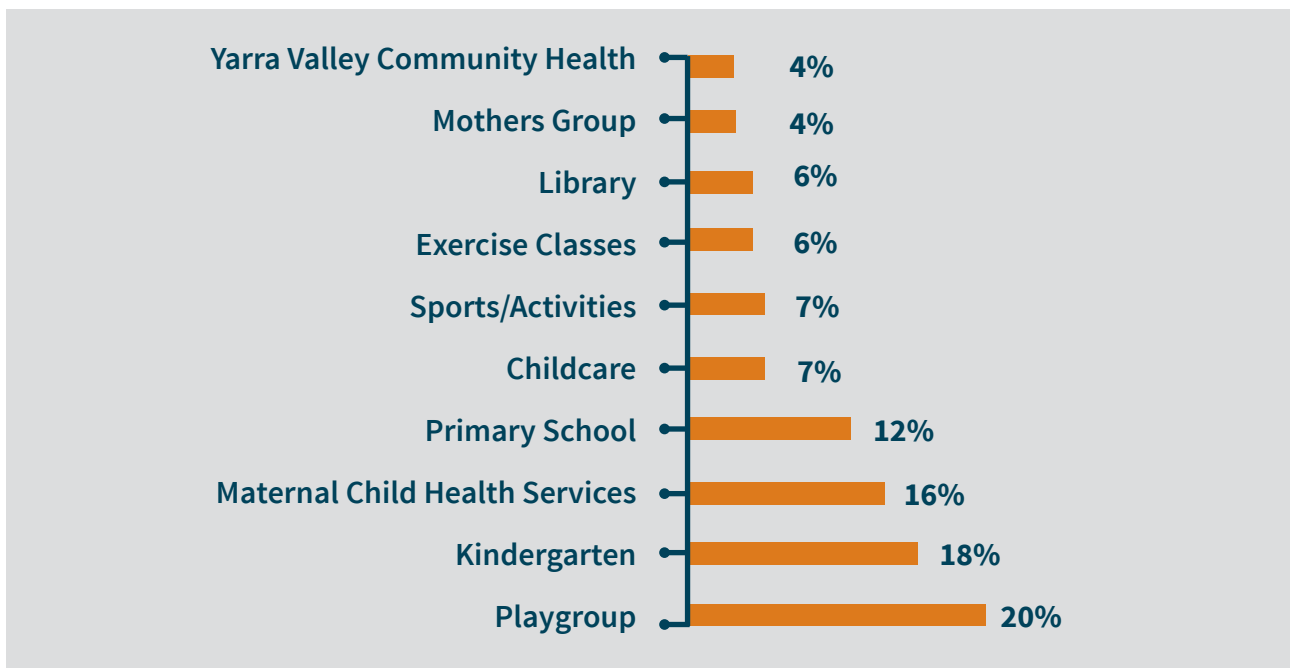


Figure 9. Early years services and supports parents/carers have attended

7.3 What parents liked about early years services

Generally the comments from parents/carers about the different early years services were positive, including reference to the benefit of having local services such as Playgroup, Kindergarten and Primary School. The majority of comments refer to the Upper Yarra kindergartens, Maternal Child Health (MCH) service and playgroups.

Quotes from parents/carers

“I like this service as it is local and I can find out what my baby weighs”

“Maternal Child Health were supportive”

“Maternal Child Health helped with key developmental stages and what’s the norm”

“Local kinder is a beautiful facility”

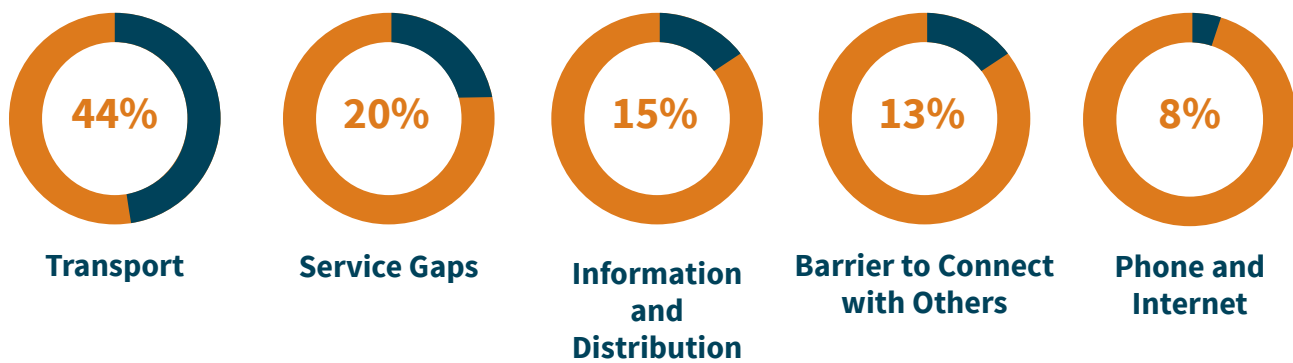
“Warburton Kindergarten was where I started to meet other parents and make friends”

“Redwood playgroup is supportive of my daughter’s needs”

7.4 Reasons parents/carers aren’t accessing early years services

Parents/carers identified reasons why people may not be accessing early years services. The common themes were transport, service gaps, information and distribution, barrier to connect with others, phone and internet coverage. See Figure 10.

Figure 10. Reasons parents/carers aren't accessing early years services



7.4.1 TRANSPORT

Many responses (44%) identified the public transport system in the Upper Yarra area as a barrier for families wanting to access services, firstly because the bus service does not operate at the times suitable for families with young children, particularly from East Warburton to Chirnside Park via Warburton and Yarra Junction. E.g. Parents/carers who are at home with the children, without a car, are limited to three services per day leaving from East Warburton, at times that are too early or too late for them to attend a playgroup or Kindergarten program in the Warburton area. Secondly, parents/carers in the Reefton area do not have access to public transport.

Thirdly, a number of Yarra Valley townships do not have public transport to connect people to other townships and respondents claim they are dependent on the car to access health and wellbeing appointments in Healesville and Mt Evelyn.

7.4.2 SERVICE GAPS

Other respondents (20%) report gaps in services can impact on people accessing services, such as:

- new families moving to the area, not having access to MCH service
- groups and activities for families are held during babies sleep times
- families needing practical support when their children are younger

7.4.3 SERVICE AND COMMUNITY INFORMATION

Some of those surveyed (15%) were not aware of what services were available and state that information distribution could be a barrier for parents/carers accessing early years services, as well as limited mobile phone and internet coverage.

7.4.4 BARRIERS TO CONNECT WITH OTHERS

Other Barriers (13%) identified relate to:

- no community meeting spaces for families to connect
- shame and stoicism about asking for help
- low self-esteem and not feeling confident to access groups and supports
- fear of child protection being notified by services
- services not alternative in their views
- language barriers for non-English speaking families.

7.4.5 PHONE AND INTERNET

Although only three people mentioned phone and internet as a barrier, it is worth noting that mobile coverage stops at East Warburton. So families living beyond the township, do not receive their mobile messages. Analysis of the type of internet connection of households in Warburton and surrounds (from Profile ID, Yarra Ranges Council website 2011) compared to Eastern Metropolitan Region shows there is a higher proportion of households with either no internet connection or a dialup connection (28.7% compared with 17.6%) and a lower proportion of households with broadband connectivity (61.3% compared with 74.6%).

7.5 What would make it easier for parents/carers to attend early years services?

Respondents who reported nil to low attendance to early years services provided feedback on what would make it easier to attend. Common themes presented were, Playgroups, Maternal and Child Health, Information and Distribution, Transport, Parent Support, Childcare, Kindergarten, Primary School, Cultural and Vaccination. See Figure 11.

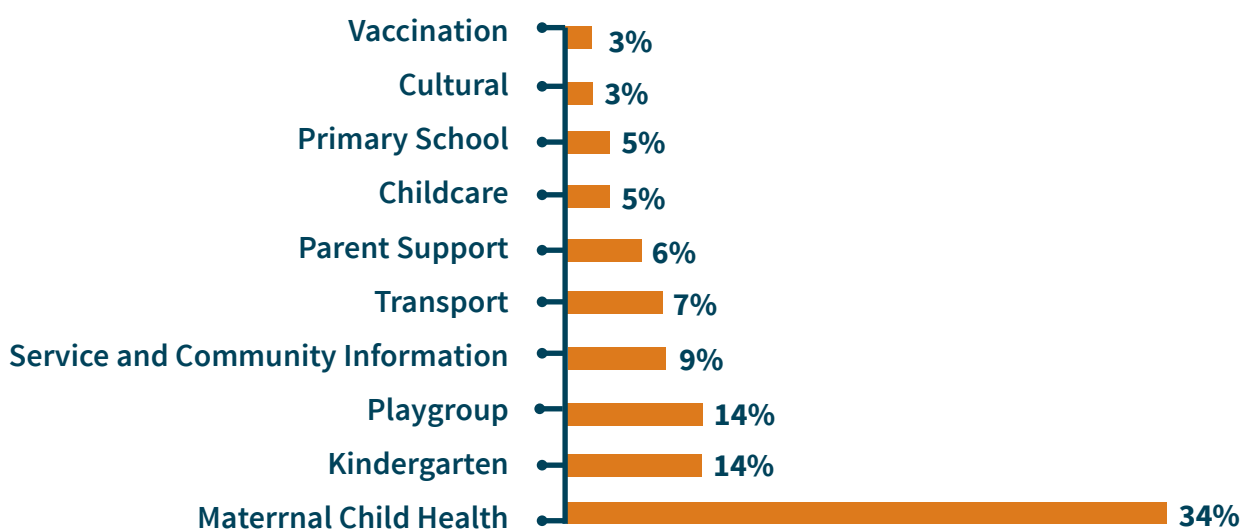


Figure 11. What would make it easier for parent/carers to attend early years services?

7.5.1 MATERNAL AND CHILD HEALTH (MCH)

Of the 65 responses, 22 comments (34%) asked for changes to the Maternal and Child Health (MCH) service, including requests for more flexible, yet streamlined approach such as:

- direct phone contact option for parents with time constraints (from the demands of baby and young children) and/or poor mobile coverage.
- increased information and knowledge sharing
- maternal and Child Health to provide parents with links to other services and supports
- more support for alternative parenting styles
- drop-in service
- improved service connection between MCH and the home-birthing support network.

7.5.2 KINDERGARTEN

Responses (14%) about kindergarten suggested some parents/carers have expectations of a more structured programme at kindergarten. Feedback also included requests for educational services to offer more natural play spaces and equipment, as well as a more holistic style of teaching support such as:

“I want my children to be in a conscious oriented environment, so no plastic toys like in mainstream services, such as kindergarten, playgroup”

7.5.3 PLAYGROUP

There were 9 comments (14%) requesting variations to the existing playgroups in the Upper Yarra area, such as:

“Non-denominational playgroup”

“Playgroup for everyone, not just for healthcare card holders”

“Playgroup during the afternoon”

7.5.4 SERVICE AND COMMUNITY INFORMATION

People said they need more information about early years services available, with more brochures, more advertising, better exposure and communication, with Maternal Child Health linking parents to support groups.

7.5.5 TRANSPORT

There were varied responses relating to transport changes to help people access services, such as improved bus times and bus routes to Reefton and the East Warburton area to help parents access playgroups, as well as extended library times on the weekend so people have more time to travel by bus or use the family car.

7.5.6 OTHER THEMES IDENTIFIED

There were a small number of responses from 5 other themes:

- parent Support
- childcare
- primary school
- cultural
- vaccination

Responses relating to Parent Support Groups focused on more activity groups on the weekends, so working fathers can also take their children, help with home deliveries of second bite food and a consistently ‘family friendly’ approach from early years services.

There were comments asking for more Childcare options such as, long daycare in the Warburton area, longer occasional care in Yarra Junction “so parents can attend appointments down the line” and daycare for non-vaccinated children.

“Occasional care more than 3 hours so parents can attend appointments down the line”

“Local childcare in Warburton area”

Comments about primary school relate to parents/carers wanting “more art”, “play materials made from more natural materials (sic)” and “more social groups for children”.

Some parents/carers from different cultural backgrounds asked that services and the community have a greater awareness about cultural diversity and skills in using interpreters to help overcome language barriers.

Recent Federal Government changes to childcare now exclude children who are not immunized. There are consequently limited choices available for parents seeking childcare to return to study or work. The immunization rates for children in the Warburton area are the lowest in the Yarra Ranges with 65% of five year olds being immunized in 2014 (see Appendix 5). This issue was reflected in a small number of survey/ interview responses, with requests for more services being available to accommodate children who are not vaccinated. Whilst some parents may seek more open and inclusive policies, service providers that rely on government funding, are restricted in what they can offer.

7.6. What Early Years services and supports parents/carers would like to access

Throughout the community consultation there have been consistent themes to the “MAGIC WAND” question, which relate to family support, infrastructure (community spaces, pool improvement, beautifying space, mobile phone and internet coverage, connection to nature with outdoor space, roads, indoor communal space), transport, activities/events, specific early years support and childcare.

See Figure 12 for the thematic analysis of the 367 responses to the “MAGIC WAND” question.

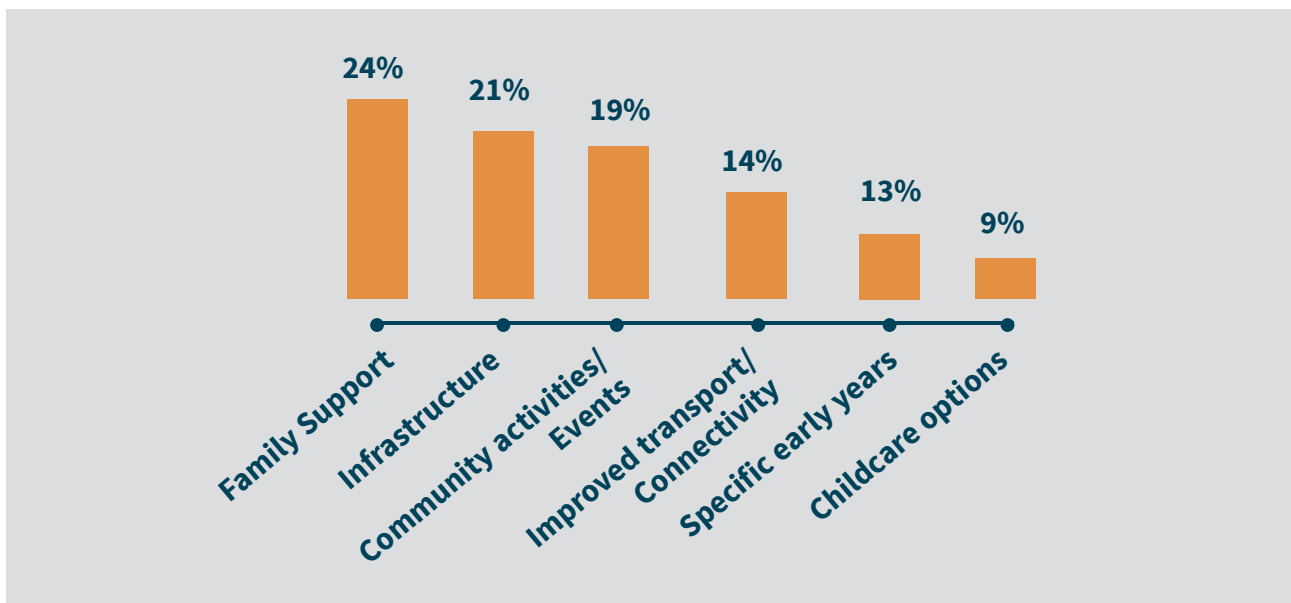


Figure 12. Early Years services and supports parents/carers would like to access

7.6.1 FAMILY SUPPORT

Of the 367 responses, 24% identified Family Support as important, such as community services and supports, service and community information, practical support, hospital and emergency, support for fathers, supports for schools and jobs. See Figure 13.

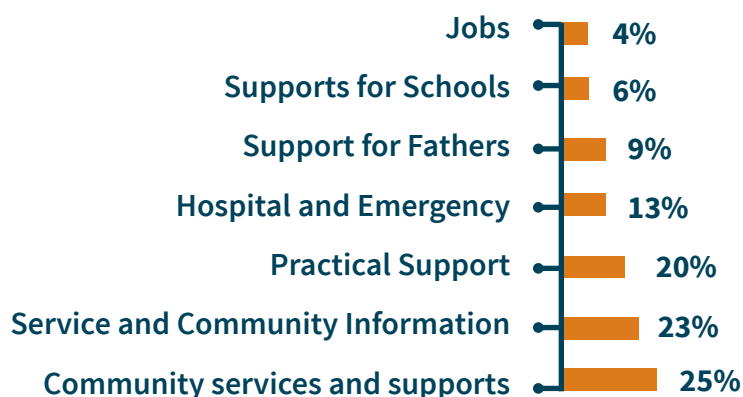


Figure 13. Family Supports parents/carers would like to access

7.6.1.1 Community services and supports

Parents/carers are asking for more “family friendly” service delivery and more early years services and supports such as:

- mental health and emotional support for parents
- funding for disadvantaged families so their children can attend sports and activities
- more welfare support for families
- inclusive services for non-vaccinated children
- more library resources for early years children
- more awareness of the issues effecting families from a CALD background
- mpecialist services to provide outreach to help reduce travel time for families with medical issues and/or children with disabilities
- family violence supports

It is worth noting that a small number of respondents (3) shared their personal experience of accessing family violence services and supports in the Upper Yarra. They suggested family violence outreach workers in the Upper Yarra area would help reduce travel for parents/carers. Other requests were for family violence support groups for women after they leave a violent partner, as well as more police to attend to restraining order breaches.

7.6.1.2 Service and Community Information

Many of the responses (23%) asked for improved information distribution, with respondents claiming they did not know what services and programmes were available in the Upper Yarra area.

“When I moved to the area I did not know where to find information and felt isolated and lonely at home with my young children”

7.6.1.3 Practical Parenting Support

There were 20% (18) of responses asking for practical support for families, such as food rosters, washing, shopping, attending

appointments, parenting support, emotional support for parents, home visits for vulnerable parents with young children and more support for parents with child/ren with a disability. Parent/carers also want access to parent education including healthy eating and feeding young children.

7.6.1.4 Hospital and Emergency

People expressed concern for being isolated from medical help and 13% of responses asked for a local hospital and emergency service.

“It should be compulsory for services to visit a mother at high risk”

7.6.1.5 Support for Fathers

Father friendly programs and fathers support groups (9%) were identified as needed, such as:

“More father inclusive programmes”

“Early Years Children’s activities on the weekends so Dads who work can attend”

7.6.1.6 Supports for Schools

People’s responses (9%) identify there is a need for a support person to link vulnerable families to community services, more crisis support for schools managing difficult behaviour to help the child stay connected and more information sharing with schools.

“Upper Yarra Family Centre to have a person/role connecting to schools and sharing information”

7.6.1.7 Jobs

A small percentage (4%) of respondents asked for improved employment prospects in the Upper Yarra area, so families could work in the area they live, reduce travel and increase family time. Two people referred to social enterprise as a model for employment and one respondent explained:

“Although the Warburton community has many skilled, charitable people starting different social enterprise projects they often do not succeed. There needs to be more funding and business/community support for social enterprise in the Warburton area, to help create jobs for people that benefit the whole community”.

7.6.2 INFRASTRUCTURE

Of the 367 responses, 21% of the comments referred to changes in the local Infrastructure, with 37% asking for play spaces/community spaces. Of the 37%, most of the responses asked for improved playgrounds in Warburton and requests for a playground in the Reefton area. There are 27% of comments asking for pool improvements, of which 70% of these requests were for the Warburton swimming pool to be reopened. See Figure 14.



Figure 14. Infrastructure parents/carers would like to access

7.6.3 COMMUNITY ACTIVITIES/EVENTS

Of those comments relating to Community Supports, 34% refer to people wanting activities for families with young children in the Warburton to Reefton area and 24% are requests for music, dance, movement and singing groups for young children. People also asked for family friendly events in the Warburton to Reefton area, exercise groups for parents in Warburton, return of the mobile library service to Warburton, as well as extended library times on Saturday and more library resources for Early Years at the Yarra Junction library. See Figure 15.

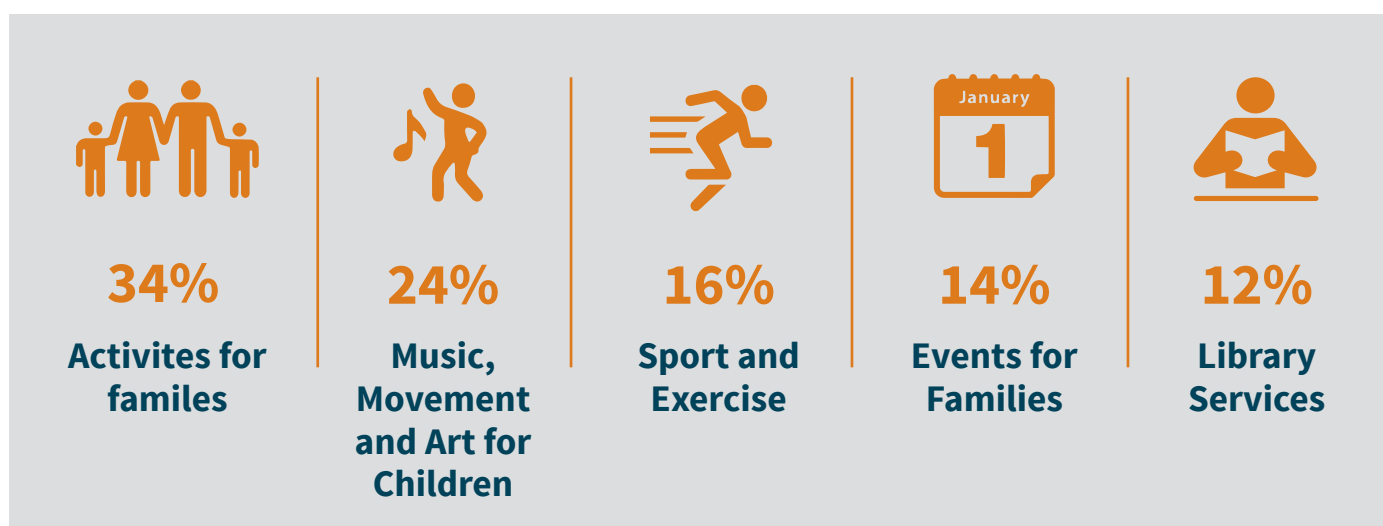


Figure 15. Community Activities/Events parents/carers would like to access

7.6.4 IMPROVED TRANSPORT/PHYSICAL CONNECTIVITY

The 15% of responses relate to people asking for improved transport and better connections to their physical environment (E.g. accessible public transport, footpaths, roads, bicycle paths and bus shelters). See Figure 16.

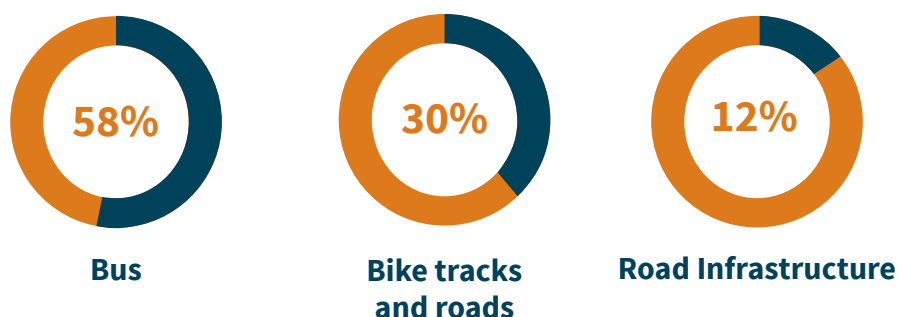


Figure 16. Improved Transport/Physical Connectivity parents/carers would like to access

7.6.4.1 Bus

More than 50% of the comments asked for an improved bus service in the Warburton to Reefton area, with requests for increased bus times during the day, evenings, weekends and public holidays, as well as more bus routes to connect the Upper Yarra townships, from Reefton to Warburton, Yarra Junction to Healesville and Powelltown to Yarra Junction. People also asked for bus routes to outlying suburbs such as Mt Evelyn, with this route continuing onto Canterbury Rd to enable workers to get to work via public transport, so they can leave the only family car at home for the parent caring for the children.

“Improve Warburton bus timetable with more bus times across the day, after hours and on the weekends”

“More buses to other townships”

“More bus services to East Warburton and Reefton”

“I want to work in aged care but cannot get to the 7am shift in the Eastern suburbs from East Warburton because I don’t drive and the bus does not start early”

7.6.4.2 Bike Tracks and Roads Infrastructure

There were 30% of responses relating to improving the bike tracks and roads, with requests for better footpaths in the Warburton area that are safe for families with young children, and extending the Warburton Trail to East Warburton.

“Safe bridge access from East Warburton to Warburton for bikes and pedestrians”

7.6.5 SPECIFIC EARLY YEARS

7.6.5.1 Supports for Parents

Of the Specific Early Years (13%) comments, 41% of responses asked for more supports for parents with young children and 20% wanting more playgroup options. See Figure 17.

There were responses asking for more maternity and antenatal services/supports in the Upper Yarra area. Survey monkey data showed 18% of respondents access an alternative ante-natal support class in Warburton, 9% access a service in Healesville and 9% attend Yarra Valley Community Health, Healthy Mother’s Healthy Babies. The remaining 54% said they access antenatal services outside the Upper Yarra region.

“Ante-natal and post-natal yoga classes/aqua-classes/parenting classes”

“A closer maternity hospital”

“Local antenatal care, because the closest is Ferntree Gully which is 1 1/2 hours away”

“Reopen the hospital in Warburton. I was very anxious about going into labour, knowing I was 1 hour 20 minutes away from hospital. I probably would move out of Warburton if I was planning another baby”

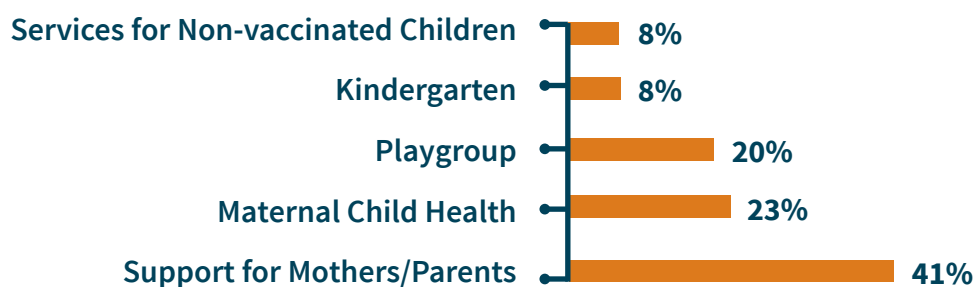


Figure 17. Specific Early Years services and supports parents/carers would like to access

7.6.5.2 Maternal and Child Health

Of the 49 responses, there were 23% (11) of Specific Early Years comments that referred to the Maternal and Child Health (MCH) Service. This included the community requesting closer links between MCH and other early years services, more early years information about key stages and developmental issues, as well as reminders for their appointments. Parents/carers requested a more flexible MCH service, which is inclusive of diversity and supportive of the home-birthing network.

“New families need to be better connected to early years services”

“MCH connect new mums in area to other support groups”

“Mums with 1 or more kids need link to MCHN and groups”

“Community midwife in the Warburton area and able to provide support to families who choose home birthing and natural parenting”

7.6.5.3 Playgroup

Requests (20%) for different Playgroup options range from parents/carers wanting playgroups in the Warburton area, afternoon sessions, bush playgroups, more inclusive playgroups, such as:

“Options for Playgroups for non-vaccinated children” “Secular playgroup option”

7.6.5.4 Kindergarten and Services for Non-Vaccinated Children

There were 8% of comments asking for better communication and structured curriculum at the Kindergarten and 8% of responses related to people asking for kindergarten services for non-vaccinated children.

7.6.6 CHILDCARE OPTIONS

Of the 33 comments for increased childcare options, 28% requested long daycare in Warburton area and 30% asked for longer occasional care so “parents can attend appointments down the line”. There were 24% of comments wanting daycare for non-vaccinated children.

See Figure 18.

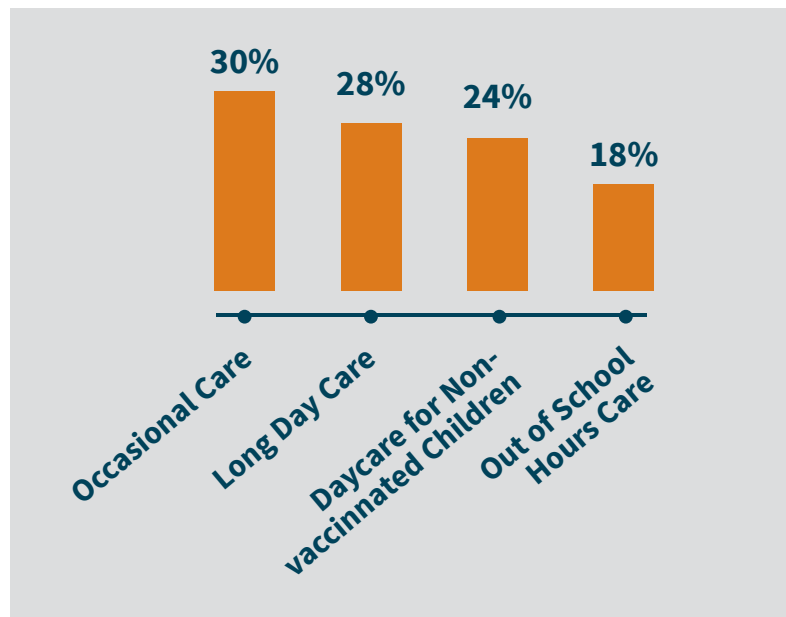


Figure 18. Childcare support options parents/carers would like to access

7.7 Upper Yarra Family Centre

Questions about the Upper Yarra Family Centre (UYFC) were asked to determine public awareness and usage. The Upper Yarra Family Centre is based in Yarra Junction and provides co-located facilities for a range of Council and community services, including early years and family support.

Most respondents (60%) were aware of the Upper Yarra Family Centre (UYFC) services, with 67% of these using them regularly (either once or twice a week/month). These results show that 40% of people were not aware of the services available for families with young children, indicating a need to undertake more community promotion.

See Figure 19 and 20.

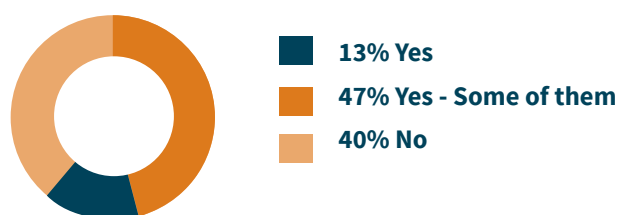


Figure 19. People aware of the family services at UYFC

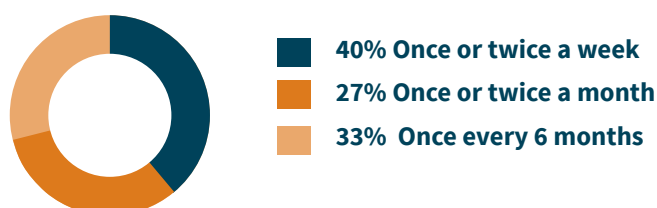


Figure 20. How often people have used services in 12 mths

8. Service Provider Interview Results

There were 56 service interviews, with 73 workers, from 35 organisations/community groups, such as: Community Services, Women's Health and Children's Services, Primary School, Early Childhood Specialist Services, Childcare, Playgroup, Kindergarten, Health and Disability, Transport, Victorian Police and Employment agency (see Appendix 2 for more detail).

All service providers interviewed report being aware of vulnerable families with young children in the Warburton area and they agree engagement with this group of clients/customers is challenging. Many services keep records of the vulnerable families, either informally or within their client management system and provide additional support or follow-up if needed. Maternal Child Health and Yarra Valley Community Health both hold the view that all mothers with new babies and their families are "vulnerable".

The services shared their strategies and recommendations of how to effectively engage with vulnerable families (see Appendix 3) including:

- flexible service delivery
- client-centred
- no wrong door policy
- service continuity and consistent staffing
- provide food and free childcare
- developing long-term relationships
- text reminders

One service provider concluded, "Sometimes the work is all about engagement".

Most services report a good understanding of universal service referral pathways, but asked for more information and contact details for secondary and tertiary service links. Issues with referral processes primarily related to wait lists, not having time to contact other services and concerns that online resource lists are not up to date.

8.1 Why families are not attending Early Years Services and Programs

Overall, the responses show the Upper Yarra service providers have insights and understanding of why vulnerable families are not accessing services. Many services identify mistrust of services and lack of confidence in program delivery as challenges to engage with vulnerable clients. Mistrust of services relates to families concerned they will be judged for their parenting and some parents are worried they will be reported to child protection. Service providers also claim continuity of service and consistent staffing is paramount for organisations to engage people in need. Interestingly, both service providers and families state that new programs and services in the Upper Yarra Valley area take at least 12 months to 2 years to be trusted and therefore successfully utilised by the local community. Service providers report limited public transport, including townships not having connecting buses, impacting on families' capacity to attend appointments. Also families with one vehicle and/or experiencing financial hardship have difficulties attending groups, childcare, school, kindergarten and specialist services.

Some providers claim poor engagement is a “cultural intergenerational issue”, with families choosing not to participate in services, programmes and/or their children’s education. Furthermore it has been noted, this attitude can extend to workers in the area, with the view “It’s how it is in the Valley”.

8.2 What services would like to offer to engage and support vulnerable families

Throughout the service provider consultation there have been consistent themes for the “MAGIC WAND” question (see Appendix 4), such as more accessible family friendly support, improved specific early years support, improved transport/connectivity, infrastructure and more activities/ events. See Figure 21 for Thematic Analysis of the 128 responses.

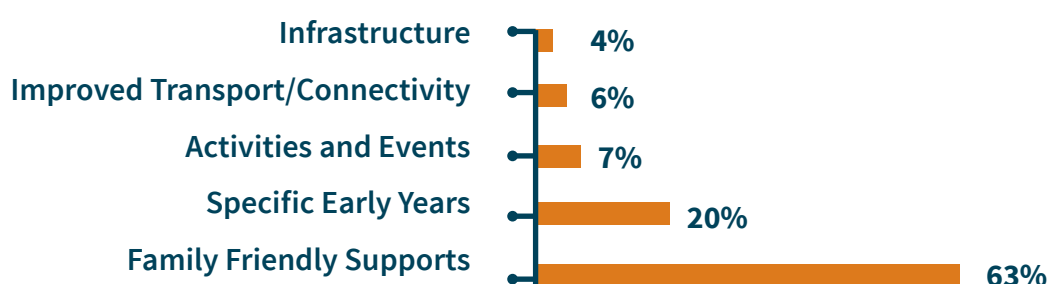


Figure 21. What services would like to offer to engage and support vulnerable families

8.2.1 FAMILY FRIENDLY SUPPORTS

Results show 63% of service providers want to offer more family friendly supports for their clients/parents/customers, which refers to service delivery, information referrals and resource person, service and community information, outreach, support groups and professional education. See Figure 22.

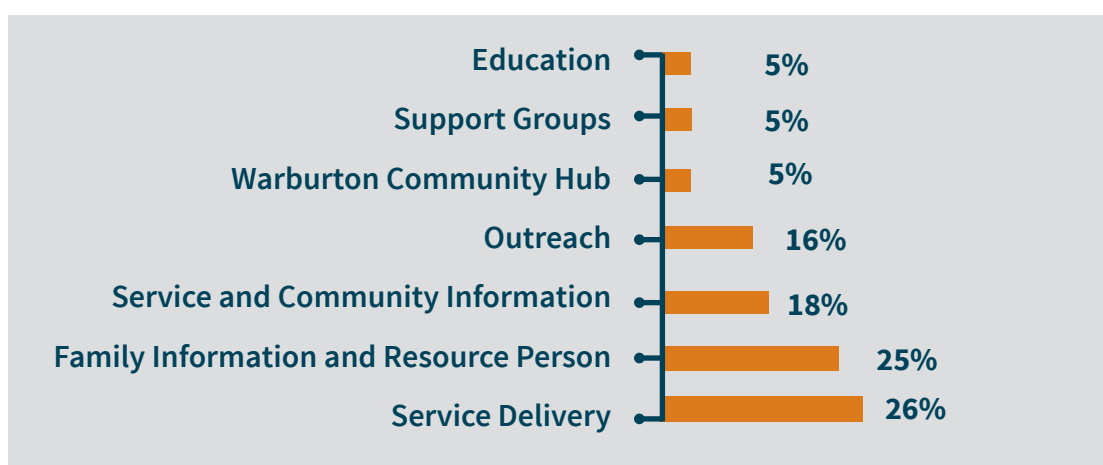


Figure 22. Family friendly supports

8.2.1.1 Service Delivery

Services asked for improved service delivery (26%), with emphasis on long-term services, programmes and consistent staff to help develop trust and relationships with families. It has been suggested by some service providers to have specialist appointments via FaceTime and Skype to help reduce travel time, particularly for families with child/ren with disabilities, which in turn could also improve attendance and decrease wait lists.

8.2.1.2 Family Information Referrals and Resource Person

Services also identified there is a need for a family information referrals and resource person (25%), because they do not always have time to research what service, programmes and supports are available and/or advocate for vulnerable families. They would like a “one stop shop”, a place they can contact for advice and information about how they can support a family in need. Also, somewhere they can send their client/family to and entrust the service to engage with the vulnerable family and assist with referrals, advocacy and accessing supports.

“One stop shop for information about family services, help with referrals, immediate help-provision of a care plan by a worker who is connected to the area and aware of the local issues”

“Crisis intervention worker to help families with support and link between schools and services”

“Familiar worker to advocate for parents and take to appointments - if mental health issues and low self esteem to help them navigate the system”

8.2.1.3 Service and Community Information

Many services emphasised the need for improved communication about the Upper Yarra services and supports for early years, including increased communication between services. Of the 18% asking for more information and better distribution, they specify a reliable resource data base for services and families, resource packs, more street

advertising of Maternal and Child Health at the Warburton Arts Centre, service expos at the Upper Yarra Family Centre with schools and activities like the, ‘Spring into Summer’ early years service expo.

8.2.1.4 Outreach

Service providers are asking for outreach workers in the Upper Yarra. Requests refer to:

- more specialist workers providing a service in Warburton such as Occupational Therapy, Dentist, Speech and Psychologist
- paediatrician to visit Yarra Junction monthly to help reduce travel time and wait lists
- social worker to provide information, referrals and links to other services and supports for isolated families
- trauma supports
- specialised programmes for children with additional support needs.

There are 5% of responses asking for outreach to operate from a ‘Warburton Community Hub’, a place that is set up for families and child friendly, featuring activities, specialists and service information. Some interviewees suggested placing the outreach service within schools to help normalise the experience for children and improve attendance from parents.

8.2.1.5 Support Groups

Other wishes relate to Family Violence Support Groups (5%) and setting up a men’s group, with mentors, to educate men on respectful relationships and how to be organised and “make sure kids’ needs are met first”. Also requested were more groups for young boys and mentors to provide role models and engage in social activities together, E.g. Sports.

Some services report the need for a local autism support group for families.

8.2.1.6 Professional Education (PD)

Service providers identify more free PD (5%) is needed in the Upper Yarra, to help reduce costs for services and give more staff the opportunity to attend.

8.2.2 SPECIFIC EARLY YEARS SUPPORT

Nearly 20% of responses identify the early years services, such as Playgroup (48%), Maternal Child Health (24%), Kindergarten (16%), and Childcare (12%) as places of opportunity to support families with young children. See Figure 23.

Ideas on how to achieve this were:

- locating playgroups in primary schools, so families become familiar with the education campus
- maternal and Child Health visiting playgroups to provide key stages and milestones information
- specialised playgroups; for child/ren who have experienced trauma, or for child/ren with autism
- parent education at playgroup
- playgroup at kindergarten
- cultural awareness days at playgroup
- free childcare so parents can access groups
- maternal and Child Health providing outreach to long day care facilities

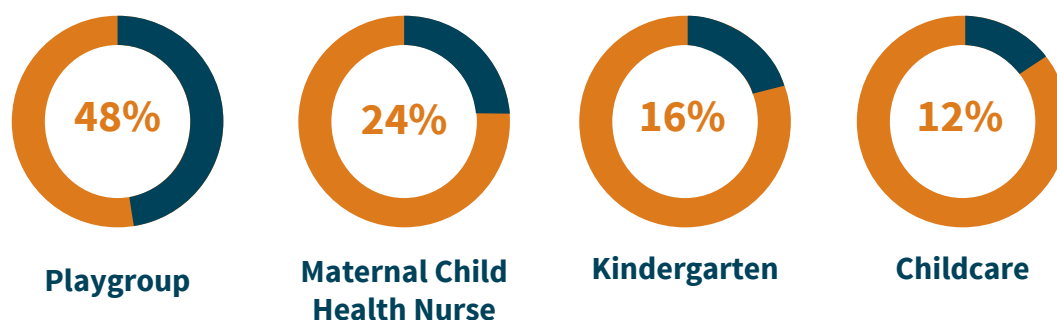


Figure 23. Specific early years support

8.2.3 ACTIVITIES/EVENTS

Service providers also want more family friendly events (7%) in the Upper Yarra area, to create an opportunity for services and community groups to display their current programs, services and supports, hand out information and meet families with children.

8.2.4 IMPROVED TRANSPORT/CONNECTIVITY

Of the 6% of responses, 62% relate to improved public transport to assist vulnerable families to access services, support programs and employment opportunities. More than 30% of the comments asked for a community bus system to take people to appointments, or groups and to connect outlying townships to Warburton and Yarra Junction.

8.2.5 INFRASTRUCTURE

Although the infrastructure responses were small (3%) it is worth noting, because they relate to an issue identified by parents/carers (“places for families to gather during winter months”), such as the need for an indoor community space for Warburton to Reefton families.

9. Project Opportunities - Research Actions

Throughout the term of the Project, opportunities evolved for short-term actions, intervention and gains, for both parent/carers and service providers, these included:

Sharing of Early Years Services and Supports Information

Throughout the community consultation, often families wanted to know what services and supports were available, so up to date verbal information was provided to families, as well as showbags containing resource information at events and street talks.

During the consultation a family was identified as not being linked to any early years services. Following consent, a home visit by the Project Worker provided an opportunity for the family to explore the issues further. Specific information and support was also provided to help the family access early years services. Support with referrals to health and education services resulted in the family engaging with these programs.

Information sharing about services available to families experiencing vulnerability also occurred during service provider interviews.

Referral Follow-up

During the consultation period it became evident a single parent family needed early years supports. With verbal consent, the Project Worker made contact with a service provider to discuss more supports for the family and a referral for the service was actioned. Previously the family had been offered this service and declined due to insufficient understanding of the service. The family is now engaging with the program and also agreed to other service support.

The “Let’s Talk about Warby” Quarterly Report findings influenced local service delivery

Two services have utilised the Project findings to guide their service delivery, by using information gathered as evidence for the need for Outreach in the Upper Yarra area.

A community legal service is setting up an Outreach support program in a Warburton community centre and Millgrove primary school.

The local mentoring/volunteer program has had a significant increase in referrals from the Warburton area, which correlates with the Project Worker informing community people and services about the service, during street-talk and surveying at community events. Brochures about this program have also been included in the showbags and available at street-talk events. This outcome is an example of how networking and understanding what services and programs look like can help increase referrals.

10. Discussion

The Project has highlighted the importance of people being connected to services and their community. This could be connection with their local kindergarten, playgroup, community group, family activities, health practitioner or an exercise group. Repeatedly, parents/carers have stated they want improved communication and information distribution about what services and supports are available for families in the Upper Yarra area and how to access them. People want virtual connection, through social media platforms, web searches and mobile phone, so reliable internet and mobile phone coverage is essential to enable access.

Families have also asked for “improved local infrastructure”, with improved family friendly access points to the river and bush picnic areas, as well as child friendly footpaths and bike safe roads, more public toilets, seating, rubbish bins and grasses trimmed in the parks and recreation reserves. Parents want improved access to public transport, with increased bus times, an extended bus route from Reefton to Warburton, as well as connecting people to other townships in the Valley area. People are asking for community spaces so families can meet and connect, both in the Warburton and Reefton areas. They specify outdoor and indoor family spaces where parents can meet and children can play safely.

A key issue in the Upper Yarra is telecommunications including internet, mobile phone coverage and power outages. All these have an impact on the community’s ability to attend appointments, stay connected to services and find out about programs in their local area.

Only a few people said they don’t want connection, with one resident openly stating “we move out here to get away from services”. However, this is not always the reason why some parents/carers are not accessing early years services. For some, it is about not having had positive experiences participating in services and supports for families, or it is about stoicism, and maintaining they do not need supports for their children, “because they

did not have help learning when they were a child”. Or it could be about low self-esteem, lack of confidence to attend a playgroup or taking their child to a children’s activity. Some may experience shame and feeling not worthy of being connected and fearful others will reject them if they attended early years groups, services/supports or worried that others will judge their parenting and/or report them to Child Protection.

If families mistrust universal services, their children may experience social, emotional, mental and physical disadvantage from not having regular exposure to maternal child health services, mother’s groups, playgroup, kindergarten and children’s activities, as well as missing out on the opportunity to be connected with the community. It is often through contact with universal services that parents can be referred to secondary supports when their child needs them.

For service providers it is important that a “no wrong door” policy is adopted which links families with young children into services and support groups. Equally important is for services to know what other supports and community groups are available in the area so they can advise vulnerable families of what help is there in a timely manner. Service providers need to explain what the referral and/or service/support program “looks like” so the vulnerable family knows what to expect. Although the family may decline referrals at first, it may be the next time they are ready to hear what can help their situation or be more accepting of advocacy and help navigating the “system”. Parents/carers want to have confidence in the services and claim continuity and consistent information from workers is paramount. Service providers state developing relationships with families and building their parents capacity helps break down the barriers and improves outcomes for vulnerable families.

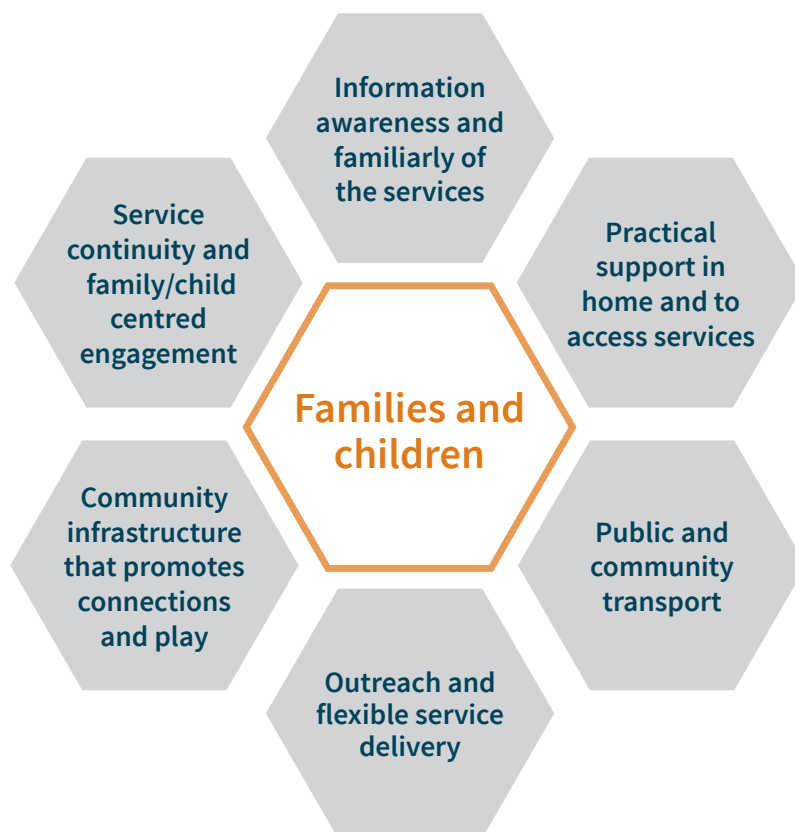
As mentioned earlier in this Report it is understood that there are small numbers of children who are experiencing vulnerability in the Upper Yarra. A key paradox highlighted by the consultation is that while efforts

in alleviating barriers and increasing service access may be targeted to a few, they will also benefit and improve outcomes for all families with children. Through the findings and subsequent recommendations and by strengthening the universal platform and other support services, a positive difference will be made for all children to have a better opportunity to thrive and reach their full potential.

11. Making a difference

Throughout the Project's journey, a number of re-occurring priority themes have emerged from the findings that have guided the recommendations. These themes have mostly come from the Magic Wand questions and strongly corroborate with both families and services.

- **Information**
Improved access to information about community and family services.
- **Practical Support**
More in home support as well as practical help to facilitate access to services.
- **Service Continuity and Engagement**
More longer term, sustainable services/ programs that build engagement and trust.
- **Community Infrastructure**
Community buildings and facilities that improve connectedness and play opportunities.
- **Flexible Service Delivery**
Service models that connect with families at a local level including assertive outreach.
- **Community /Public Transport**
Improved access to transport options across the townships, when families need it.



12. Recommendations

Based on the Project findings, the following recommendations have emerged for further discussion and action:

That a leadership/governance structure be established that will develop an Action Plan around the findings and recommendations of this report, as well as gain service and community commitment to consider and implement the following key priorities.

1. Information distribution about family support

Council and community services explore new and better ways to improve information distribution about family support services and community events and activities in the Upper Yarra area in order to increase social connections between services and families.

2. Improve public and community transport services

Partnerships be formed to actively explore ways to improve public and community transport services, that more frequently link more townships, provide better access and shelters as well as transport people to support groups.

3. More family friendly with increased opportunities for play and meeting spaces

Services consider how existing and planned infrastructure can be more family friendly with increased opportunities for play and meeting spaces that promote community connectedness and parent support opportunities.

4. A new initiative

A new initiative (for example a Home-School/Service outreach model) be investigated that identifies and engages families (with young children) experiencing vulnerability, to provide information and facilitate access to early years and referrals to additional support.

5. Practical in-home support for families

Advocacy be undertaken for the continuity and increased capacity of existing programs

that provide practical in-home support for families (especially with new babies) such as Home Start.

6. Family support events/ activities programs be activated

New family support events/ activities programs be activated, including school based Playgroups and more family friendly events in the Warburton area in partnership with early years, family and schools to connect families and the community together.

7. Build their capacity for providing family centred practice

To work together with services and community groups to build their capacity for providing family centred practice including professional development and family friendly service delivery.

8. Include additional Upper Yarra communities

That implementation of actions will not be limited to the Warburton community but also include additional Upper Yarra communities where this is or has been identified as desirable.

9. New programs/projects in the Upper Yarra make a commitment for longer term (minimum of 24 months)

Services establishing new programs/projects in the Upper Yarra make a commitment for longer term (minimum of 24 months), in order for families and services to be aware and build trust.

13. Conclusion

Throughout the past twelve months the “Let’s Talk about Warby” Project has taken Council on a journey of discovery; finding out why families with young children are not accessing services and supports and hearing what families want and need to help raise their young children.

Overall most people report satisfaction with the early years services in the Upper Yarra area. Some parents/carers claim they are not getting the additional support for their families, which predominantly relates to service delivery. Central to supporting families with young children in the Warburton to Reefton area is creating different models of support for this unique community.

Talking with service providers has been an important part of the journey, to help understand the service delivery constraints and create a picture of what early years services in the Upper Yarra could look like. The Project results reinforce the importance of relationships between families and service providers as being paramount to building trust and better outcomes. The Project findings and recommendations provide a good start to building a robust family friendly early years system in the Upper Yarra.



Appendices



“The Project results reinforce the importance of relationships between families and service providers as being paramount to building trust and better outcomes.”

Appendix 1

Parent/Carers: Community Engagement Events

OCTOBER 2015

Teddy's Bear
Picnic
Warburton
Primary
School Spring
Fest

NOVEMBER 2015

Soup Kitchen
Redwood
Second Bite
UYFC Yarra
Junction
Second Bite
Redwood
Centre
Warburton

DECEMBER 2016

Second Bite
UYFC Yarra
Junction
Second Bite
Redwood
Centre
Warburton

JANUARY 2016

Treasure on
the Trail
Reefton Group
Mothers
Street talk
Warburton
Arts Centre x3
Reefton Rocs

FEBRUARY 2016

StreetTalks
Warburton x2
Community
Space x2
Koha x2

MAY 2016

Martyrs Bus
Service x4
Route 683

MARCH 2016

Free Family
Fun Night East
Warburton
Wickedly
Awesome
WarbyFest ERL
Warburton
Primary School

Appendix 2

Service Provider Consultations

WOMEN'S HEALTH AND CHILDREN'S SERVICES

Maternal Child Health Nurses

Enhanced Contracted Mental Health Nurse
Yarra Valley Community Health (YVCH): Mums and Bubs, Mums in Training, Healthy Mothers Healthy Babies, Mums Day Out.

Babes in Arms Warburton

Enhanced Maternal Child Health Team

EARLY CHILDHOOD SPECIALIST SERVICES

Eastern Health Pediatric Occupational Therapist

Early Childhood Intervention Service (ECIS)
EACH- ECIS

HEALTH AND DISABILITY

Eastern Health Child and Family Team Leader
Yarra Ranges Metro Access

Interchange Disability Service

CHILDCARE

Upper Yarra Community House Occasional care
Upper Yarra Family Centre

UYCH Long Day Care

Yarra Ranges Council Inclusion Support Worker

Zebra Daycare (formerly Happyland)

PLAYGROUP

YVCH Supported Playgroup

Gumboots Playgroup UYCH

Woori Wallabies Playgroup Woori Yallock

KINDERGARTEN

Yarra Ranges Preschool Field Officer Warburton Kindergarten

All Saints Kindergarten

Millgrove Kindergarten

Wesburn Kindergarten-Principal

UYCH Kindergarten

Yarra Ranges Kindergarten Inc

PRIMARY SCHOOL

Warburton Primary School Wellbeing Officer and Teachers

Wesburn Primary School

Millwarra Primary School Chaplain and Teachers

Yarra Junction Primary School Wellbeing Officer

Little Yarra Steiner School Wellbeing Worker & Early Years Teacher

Woori Yallock Primary School

St Joseph's Primary School

COMMUNITY SERVICES

UYCH In-Home Care

Upper Yarra Community Enterprise LinC

River Valley Church

Redwood Centre

LinC Toy Shop

UYCH Children's Services Management

Eastern Community Legal

Koha Café in Yarra Junction

Community Space in Warburton

Second Bite Yarra Junction

Parent Champions

Baptist Church

Homestart- Connections

Yarra Ranges Councillor Jim Childs

EMPLOYMENT AGENCIES

APM-Job Network Provider in Warburton

TRANSPORT

Martyrs Bus Service

LAW ENFORCEMENT

Warburton Police

Appendix 3

Strategies service providers feel are the most successful in engaging with vulnerable families

1. I make sure it is not a “cold referral” – so the referrer will phone me during their session and set up the appointment with the client present. A brochure is provided to the client about the service and how to contact. Joint visit can be arranged to assist with engagement.
2. Use tentative language and be curious, don't be afraid to ask questions. “What is it like for you?” We meet clients in home, office or park, café if they are not comfortable with us coming to their home.
3. Build up resource database so have services to refer or recommend clients to show reliability and that we care.
4. We have a “no wrong door policy” and if we cannot help the family we make sure we can provide contact details for a service that can. When possible we contact the service on their behalf to set up an appointment time.
5. We have the same class of early years students for 3 years so we develop relationships with parents and “know the child”, so we can discern if referrals and additional learning supports are needed.
6. Tell clients “you're the expert”.
7. Provide food.
8. Texting appointment reminders, mothers with young babies and mental health issues find it hard to remember.
9. Keep phoning and texting mothers if no reply.
10. Phone-call, texts and home visit if appropriate.
11. Help with cleaning their house or taking meal.
12. Develop contacts with indigenous workers, talk to other indigenous family members, ask client to contact caseworker.
13. Send the child a birthday card.
14. Phone and/or if I have long-term relationship with family and concerned I will home visit and ask “How can we help?”
15. Long-term relationships most success in engaging with vulnerable families.
16. Talk with School Chaplains about families in need. If its a DHS client contact caseworker.
17. Community Hub with couch for parents to relax and chat to staff if needed with book of resources and less info on walls, computer and toys for children.
18. Have Drop In feature to service and provide coffee.
19. Always being welcoming and non judgemental.
20. Not asking personal questions and being a consistent service.
21. Take gift/food hamper, eggs for home visits.
22. Sometimes the work is keeping the family engaged.
23. Keep ringing or find other emergency contacts or services the client has been connected with before.
24. Make a personal connection.
25. Grandparents at playgroups improves communication.
26. Setup programmes same days as other supports.
27. Model acceptance during sessions.
28. Offer playgroup during school term holidays.
29. Tour of Family Services to help develop.

Appendix 4

What services and programs, services would like to offer to engage and support vulnerable families

Family Friendly Supports (63%)	Service Delivery (26%)	Family Resource Person (25%)	Information Distribution (18%)	Outreach (16%)	Warburton Community Hub (5%)	Support groups (5%)	Education (5%)
Specific Early Years (20%)	Playgroup (48%)	MCHN (24%)	Kindergarten (16%)	Childcare (12%)			
Activities and Events (7%)	Activities and Events (7%)						
Improved Transport/Connectivity (6%)	Buses (62%)	Community Buses (38%)					
Infrastructure (4%)	Indoor Community Space (50%)						

Appendix 5

Demographics and Key Indicators for the Warburton area⁵

OVERVIEW

Warburton is located in Yarra Ranges' Outer East and is covered by postcode 3799. This postcode also covers Warburton East, McMahon's Creek, Millgrove, Reefton, Wesburn and Big Pats Creek. The area has 6,015 residents.



Key issues for the area include:

- a long distance to health services.
- a high level of hospital admissions is forecast for Yarra Ranges Central by 2021/22.
- an above average level of residents with a disability and an above average level of residents who were caring for someone with a disability.
- very low childhood immunisation rates, particularly amongst 5 year olds.
- a high level of family violence incidents in both postcodes in 2011/12 when compared to the whole of Yarra Ranges.
- a low level of residents who had completed Year 12, were studying at university or had completed a degree.

⁵ Data note: All comparisons are to Victoria in 2011, unless stated otherwise.

- above average unemployment and a low proportion of full-time workers.
- well below average households incomes.
- a very high level of one parent families.
- a high level of mortgage stress, but low rents for those renting rather than buying.
- a high level of disadvantage, based on the 2011 Index of Disadvantage. The area was also considerably below average on the Index of Education and Occupation, and on the Index of Economic Resources.
- in 2012, Warburton/McMahons Creek was the only township⁶ in the Outer East with a high level of developmentally vulnerable children. Twenty-nine percent were vulnerable in one or more areas, compared to 19.5% across Victoria; 17% were vulnerable in two or more areas, compared to 9.5% across Victoria. This puts the area in the highest group in the state for vulnerability.

DEMOGRAPHICS

Warburton has an average level of Indigenous residents, at 0.8% compared to 0.7% across Victoria.

Only 6% of residents in postcode 3799 were studying at university, compared to 15% across Victoria; 15% had a Bachelor degree compared to 26% across Victoria; and 36% had completed Year 12 or equivalent, compared to 52% across Victoria.

The area had slightly above average unemployment in 2011, at 6.1% compared to 5.4% for Victoria. It had a low level of full-time workers, at 52.5% compared to 59% across Victoria. Postcode 3799 had well below average household incomes, at \$825 per week compared to \$1,216 across Victoria.

The area had a very high level of one parent families, at 24% compared to 15.5% across Victoria. Most single parents were female (84.5%). Twenty-eight percent of adults had cared for a child or children during in the last two weeks, in line with the 27% Victorian average.

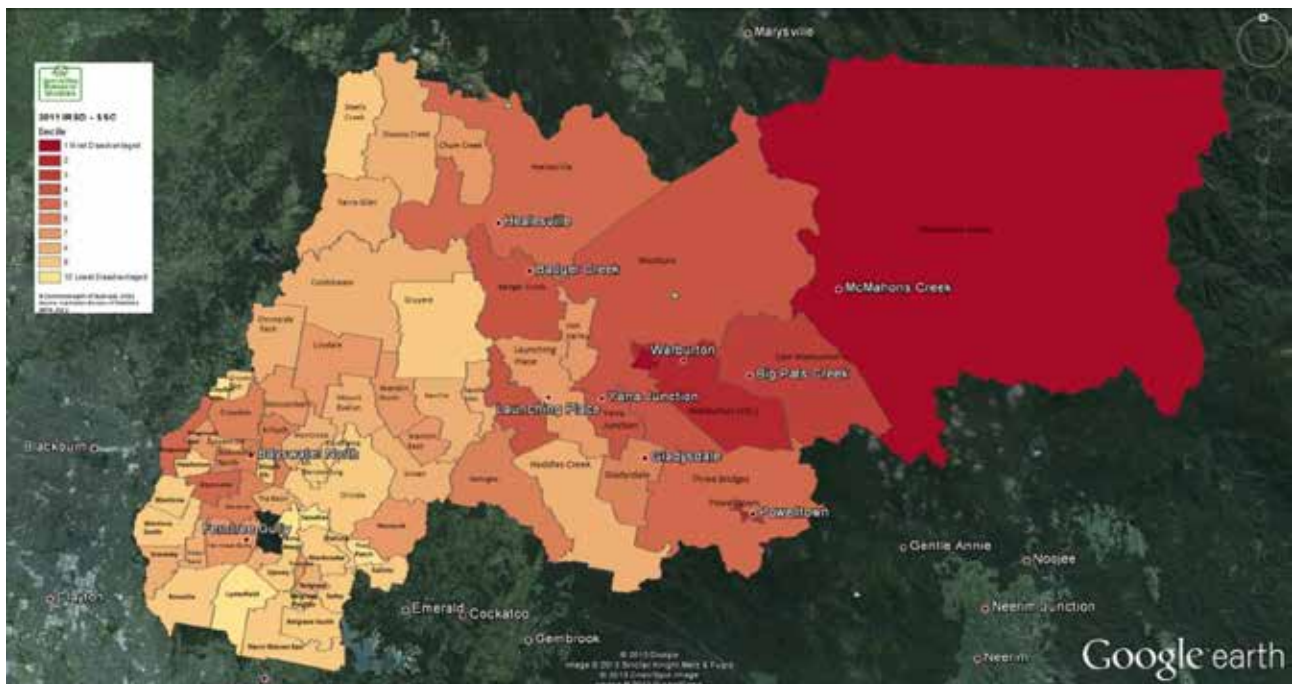
The Warburton area had a high level of occupied private dwellings with a mortgage at 43% in 3799, compared to 36% across Victoria. It had a low level of rental dwellings. The median rent was \$224 compared to \$277 across Victoria. Rent payments were 30% or more of incomes in 9% of households paying rent, the same as the Victorian average. This shows Warburton as having relatively low rents, and those renting are not in a high level of housing stress.

Median mortgage payments were \$1,300 compared to \$1,700 across Victoria. Mortgage payments were 30% or more of household income in 14% of households, compared to 10% across Victoria, giving Warburton an above average level of mortgage stress.

INDICATORS OF DISADVANTAGE

Postcode 3799 has an Index of Disadvantage score of 930, compared to the national average of 1000, putting it well below average and in the bottom 20% of postcodes. It is in the bottom 20% of postcodes for the Index of Economic Resources (with a score of 956), and in the bottom 30% of postcodes for the Index of Education and Occupation (with a score of 932).

⁶ Reefton and Powelltown were not surveyed.



Map of Indicators of Disadvantage: Yarra Ranges, 2011

HEALTH

In the Outer East, the distance to the nearest health service ranges from 27 kilometres in Wesburn to 80 kilometres in Warburton East. This lack of access to health services will pose an increasing problem over the next ten years, as the area's level of demand for hospital services grows. Yarra Ranges Central (which covers Warburton) is forecast to have one of the highest rates of hospital admissions in the Outer East by 2021/22, along with Yarra Ranges North and Knox North-West. It is forecast to have 220 hospital admissions per 1,000 residents by 2021/22.

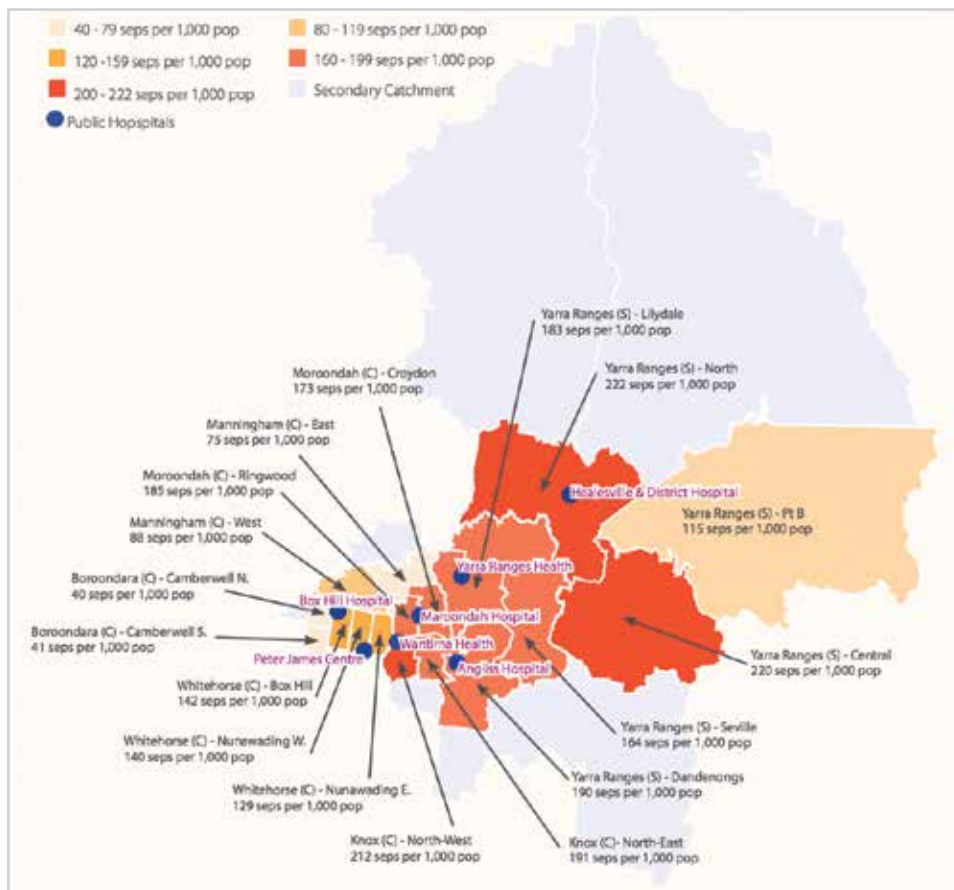
In 2011, the Warburton area had an above average level of residents with a disability, at 5.7% in postcode 3799, compared to 4.8% across Victoria. Thirteen percent of residents had provided unpaid assistance to a person with a disability, compared to 11% across Victoria.

The area had relatively low childhood immunisation rates as of September 2013, with one of the lowest rankings amongst the 29 Yarra Ranges postcodes, particularly amongst older children:

- one and two year olds had an immunisation rate of 88%.
- five year olds had an immunisation rate of 65%.

Postcode 3799 had a high level of family violence incidents. In 2011/12, it had 28 family violence incidents, up more than 50% from 18 in both 2009/10 and 2010/11. The rate per 1,000 residents was 4.66, ranking it 7th out of the 26 Yarra Ranges postcodes for which rates were available.⁷

⁷ The Yarra Ranges average for 2011/12 was 7.2 per 1,000 but this is not comparable as the LGA rate is a different measure of incident types compared to the postcode rate.



Forecast eastern health separations (hospital admissions) per 1000 population by 2021/22 geographical SLA⁸

8 Map courtesy of Eastern health 2022 The Strategic clinical Service Plan 2012–2022, Fig.9.4c

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**Contact the Early Years Team at Yarra Ranges Council
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