



Ararat Rural City

Lake Bolac & Surrounds Childcare Demand & Feasibility Study

Community Consultation Summary Report

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Summary

The Ararat Rural City Council has undertaken a childcare demand and feasibility study in Lake Bolac and the surrounding areas. This initiative aimed to:

- Gather information on the likely demand for childcare places, including days and times that care is likely to be needed.
- Gauge how much families are able to pay for childcare services, taking into account childcare subsidies.
- This initiative also looked at Outside of School Hours Care services (OSHC), occasional care and school holiday care programs.

The information obtained in this study will be summarised into a report and used to liaise with potential childcare providers on supplying childcare services in Lake Bolac.

This document is a summary of the community consultation that occurred over 6 drop-in sessions in December 2023 and January 2024 across Lake Bolac, Willaura, Streatham, Mininera and Wickliffe. An online survey was also available from 12 December 2023 to 31 January 2024.

A total of 45 survey responses were received with most (42) received online. A total of 71 individual children need childcare, before and after kinder care, or Outside of School Care (OSHC) on various days of the week (see tables below).

Questions and Responses

1. Does your family require access to childhood services, such as childcare, Outside of School Hours Care (OSHC) services or school holiday programs in Lake Bolac?

Answer	Number of Responses
Yes	43
No	2

2. Do you currently use a childcare service?

Answer	Number of Responses
Yes	27
No	18

3. Optional: You have indicated that you currently use a childcare service. Please provide details on what services you currently use.

Comments Submitted	Number of Responses
Family Day Care	10
Occasional Care	2
Nanny	4
Private Babysitter	1
Child Care/Day Care	11
Early Learning Centre	1
Family	1

4. Optional: You have indicated that you currently use a childcare service. How much do you currently pay per day or per hour for your childcare?

Comments Submitted	Number of Responses
\$0 - \$25 per day	2
\$26 - \$50 per day	2
\$51 - \$75 per day	0
\$76 - \$100 per day	5
\$101 - \$125 per day	2
\$126 - \$150 per day	5
\$151 - \$175 per day	1
Not sure/Other	1
Paid hourly rate	\$11 per hour x 1 \$14 - \$16 per hour \$30 per hour x 2

5. Optional: You have indicated that you currently use a childcare service. Would you consider changing the service you currently use if a new centre-based childcare service or a new family day care service become available in Lake Bolac?

Answer	Number of Responses
Yes	16
No	0
Not sure or prefer not to say	2
Other (comments below)	7
Comments submitted for 'Other':	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Depends on the hours. I currently drop off 7:30am and pick up 5:30pm and it's only closed for 2 weeks over Xmas and public holidays, so would need at least that. • If there was opportunity for employment for myself than yes • Need more days • I live where we are atm, but it's so, so expensive for us. • Would prefer one in Willaura • Would use whatever is available • Prefer in home care, but wouldn't rule out childcare either 	

6. How many children do you currently have that require a childcare, OSHC or school holiday program place? Please include their current age. (Submitted responses where manually categorised into the ages in the table below.)

Age	Number of Children
Unclear*	9
0	3
1	14
2	20
3	10
4	4
5	4
6	3
7	1
8	3
Total	71

*The hours of childcare required for children with unclear ages were consistent with childcare hours, as opposed to OSHC or before and after kindergarten care.

7. Do you plan to have more children? If so, how many and roughly when (what year) do you plan to have them? (Submitted responses where manually entered into the categories in the table below and the sum total provided.)

Comments Submitted	Number
Yes	27
No	17
Undecided	3
Total is approximately 28-30 children planned over the next few years	

8. How regularly would you require childcare or OSHC? (More than one response was allowed)

Answer	Number of Responses
All year round	27
Only during harvest season (approx. late November to early February)	2
Occasionally, about once or twice a week	16
Occasionally, about once or twice a month	2
School holiday programs only	1
Other (comments below)	6
Comments submitted for 'Other': <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • School terms, open to summer school holidays • In or near Willaura too • 2 days a week • 5 days a week • 2-3 days per week • During school terms 	

Questions 9 to 11 asked responders to indicate what days of the week and what start and finish times they required. The responses were manually organised into the following tables.

Note: Kindergarten days is assumed to be Tuesday to Friday for 4 year olds (Pre-Prep roll out from 2025) and Thursday to Friday for 3 year olds from 8.30am to 4.00pm. For Lake Bolac P-12 College, student arrival is from 8.40am and programs start at 8.50am until 3.30pm.

Table 1. Childcare Demand for Monday, minimum places needed: 40

Age	Start Time					Finish Time					Total
	6:30	7:00	7:30	8:00	8:30	16:30	17:00	17:30	18:00	18:30	
0 to 2	3	6	5	6	1	-1	-3	-7	-7	-3	21
Unclear	0	1	0	1	2	-1	-2	-1	0	0	4
3 to Pre-school	0	1	2	5	1	0	-3	-3	-1	-2	9
Before & After Kinder	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	0
OSHC	0	0	0	6	0	0	-4	0	0	-2	6

Table 2. Childcare Demand for Tuesday, minimum places needed: 41

Age	Start Time					Finish Time					Total
	6:30	7:00	7:30	8:00	8:30	16:30	17:00	17:30	18:00	18:30	
0 to 2	3	6	7	6	3	-3	-5	-7	-7	-3	24
Unclear	0	1	0	1	2	-1	-2	-1	0	0	4
3 to Pre-school	0	1	3	4	0	0	-2	-3	-1	-2	8
Before & After Kinder	0	0	0	1	-	0	-1	0	0	0	1
OSHC	0	0	0	4	0	0	-2	0	0	-2	4

Table 3. Childcare Demand for Wednesday, minimum places needed: 47

Age	Start Time					Finish Time					Total
	6:30	7:00	7:30	8:00	8:30	16:30	17:00	17:30	18:00	18:30	
0 to 2	3	6	6	8	1	-4	-3	-8	-6	-3	24
Unclear	0	1	0	3	2	-3	-2	-1	0	0	6
3 to Pre-school	0	1	3	4	0	0	-1	-4	-1	-2	8
Before & After Kinder	0	0	0	3	-	-1	-1	-1	0	0	3
OSHC	0	0	0	6	0	0	-4	0	0	-2	6

Table 4. Childcare Demand for Thursday, minimum places needed: 46

Age	Start Time					Finish Time					Total
	6:30	7:00	7:30	8:00	8:30	16:30	17:00	17:30	18:00	18:30	
0 to 2	3	6	5	6	3	-2	-6	-7	-6	-3	23
Unclear	0	1	0	1	1	-1	-1	-1	0	0	3
3 to Pre-school*	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Before & After Kinder	0	1	2	8	-	-1	-4	-5	0	-2	11, 12
OSHC	0	0	0	4	0	0	-2	-4	0	-2	4, 8

*All 3 to pre-school aged are assumed to participate in kindergarten

Table 5. Childcare Demand for Friday, minimum places needed: 46

Age	Start Time					Finish Time					Total
	6:30	7:00	7:30	8:00	8:30	16:30	17:00	17:30	18:00	18:30	
0 to 2	3	6	4	7	1	-1	-6	-6	-5	-3	21
Unclear	0	1	0	1	1	-1	-1	-1	0	0	3
3 to Pre-school*	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Before & After Kinder	0	1	1	8	-	-1	-4	-5	0	-2	10, 12
OSHC	0	0	0	6	0	0	-4	-4	0	-2	6, 10

*All 3 to pre-school aged are assumed to participate in kindergarten

12. How much would you be able to pay for childcare or OSHC in Lake Bolac per hour and per child?

Please consider the following points:

- The fees at Long Day Care centres in small regional towns tend to be around \$11 per hour per child, before Child Care Subsidy payments are taken into account. For example, Beaufort Early Learning Centre is open from 8am to 6pm and charge \$110 per day (\$11 per hour). Dimboola Early Learning Centre are open from 8am to 5:30pm and charge \$105 per day (\$11.05 per hour), and Chatsworth Occasional Child Care fees are \$83 per day for 9am to 4.30pm, 2 days a week (\$11.06 per hour).

- In order to establish a *new* childcare service in Lake Bolac that is financially viable, a childcare provider may need charge a higher rate than services in Beaufort, Dimboola or Chatworth.
- The Child Care Subsidy hourly rate cap for Centre Based Day Care (long day care and occasional care) is \$13.73 per hour.

Answer	Number of Responses
More than \$13.73 per hour for each child	7
Up to \$13.73 per hour for each child	5
Up to \$12.50 per hour for each child	9
Up to \$11.50 per hour for each child	9
Up to \$11 per hour for each child	4
Less than \$11 per hour for each child	5
Other (comments below)	6
Comments submitted for 'Other': <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Unsure what is usual? • Flexible depending on other aspects • I understand how the costs are worked out, but we receive no subsidy, so the less the better for us! • Dependent on service but happy to pay for 2-3 days per week of care • \$11 is reasonable • Happy to pay anything, childcare means we can work more, which equals more subsidy 	

13. Optional: If you have any further comments or feedback regarding childcare, OSHC services or school holiday programs in Lake Bolac and surrounding areas, please share these below.

(Responses to this question have been kept confidential)

14. Optional: If you would like to receive updates from the Ararat Rural City Council on childcare or OSHC services in Lake Bolac, please provide your name, email or other contact details below.

(Responses to this question have been kept confidential)