The State of Mornington Peninsula’s Children

AN INITIATIVE OF THE MORNINGTON PENINSULA EARLY YEARS STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIP
DECEMBER 2014
Foreword

From the minute you enter the Shire, there is a uniqueness, a hidden magic and a definite sense of passion and place. It is hard to describe. The Peninsula truly does resemble a playground waiting to be explored. Those in roles that advocate to support children, young people and their families within this playground do so with an understanding of the diversity of life and lives that reside across the Peninsula and the many and varied challenges each face. They do so with a need to understand where children are at now and what they can best do to support them to grow in the future. They see an urgency to collaborate, celebrate and “walk alongside” families to ensure that every child has the opportunity to reach their optimal potential.

Finding the words to explain just why understanding and improving outcomes for children and young people across the Mornington Peninsula is such an important task found the Partnership reflecting on the words of our courageous former-Governor General of the Commonwealth of Australia, Ms Quentin Bryce who stated: “As a society we must place children at the centre of our attention, we must value their uniqueness and worth as individuals and citizens, and we must champion parents, carers and teachers in their vital role. Alert to the special challenges of social, economic and indigenous disadvantage, we must ensure that all Australian children have access to services that nurture positive development. This support, and the continued engagement by parents, families and extended circles of care, will provide young people with a strong, stable foundation for learning and maturing”. (PwC, 2011 p5)

These words hold as true for Mornington Peninsula as they do for Australia as a whole, and the Partnership hope the State of Mornington Peninsula’s Children can act as a springboard for positive action, engagement and outcomes for children and young people in the years to come.
Message from the Mayor

On behalf of my Councillor colleagues, I would like to take this opportunity to extend my thanks to the partner organisations that dedicated time, energy, enthusiasm and hard work in bringing this report to life. It is through the collective impact of partnerships such as the Mornington Peninsula Early Years Strategic Partnership that we have our best opportunity of making a real difference in the lives of local children and their families.

As a world, a nation and a community we have come a long way in defining, understanding and taking action to protect the rights of children. The Mornington Peninsula Shire Council has a long standing reputation as a leader in advocating for children and working in partnership with our service sector to improve outcomes for children. Our Best Start Partnership has gone from strength to strength since its establishment in 2006. We have led the way in a number of important initiatives including the early implementation of the Australian Early Development Census. This report is another step forward in the path towards a deeper understanding of the experience of all children within our community. It provides a tool and a resource that has not previously been available at the local level to support Council and the broader community in being strategic in their approach to investing resources, including time and energy, into ensuring as many children as possible have the opportunity to reach their full potential.

So with heartfelt thanks to the many people that made this report possible I would like to leave you with a quote from a speech by Nelson Mandela, former President of South Africa, which is just as relevant at home here on the Peninsula as it was on the International stage where the words were first spoken:

There can be no keener revelation of a society’s soul than the way in which it treats its children... Safety and security don’t just happen, they are the result of collective consensus and public investment. We owe our children, the most vulnerable citizens in our society, a life free of violence and fear.

Thank you

Cr Bev Colomb
Mayor, Mornington Peninsula Shire Council
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## Acknowledgements

A heartfelt thanks is extended to the members of the Mornington Peninsula’s Early Years Strategic Partnership for their passion, contribution and continual support throughout the preparation of this report. Deep partnership contributions have been offered from long standing representatives of the following agencies:

- Anglicare Victoria
- Biala Peninsula
- Community Kinders Plus
- Family Life
- Frankston Mornington Peninsula Medicare Local
- Good Shepherd Youth and Family Services
- Good Start
- Hastings Primary School
- Mornington Peninsula Shire
- Oz Child
- Peninsula Health Community Health
- The Department of Education and Early Childhood Development (DEECD)

Thanks also go to St Luke’s Anglicare for inspiring the Partnership to embark on this journey and offering encouraging advice during its development.

Special thanks to Hastings Primary School for sharing wonderful photos of children actively involved in their learning community and to the many children across the Shire who offered drawings of what being healthy, happy and safe means to them – these photos and drawings have given richness and life to the *State of Mornington Peninsula’s Children*.

And last but in no way least our thanks goes to the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development Best Start Advisors that took this journey with the Partnership and provided invaluable advocacy, support and advice along the way.
The State of Mornington Peninsula’s Children is an initiative of the Mornington Peninsula Early Years Strategic Partnership.

This benchmark report seeks to provide a clear picture of how children and families are faring on key indicators relative to those residing in other areas of Victoria. Four outcomes areas are reported on: being healthy; building wellbeing; learning and developing; and staying safe.

This report demonstrates that as a municipality, children in the Mornington Peninsula Shire are faring well on several indicators, with improvements to be made in some and gaps in available data to support understanding for others. However there are distinct pockets of disadvantage across the municipality and this is reflected in how children living in different areas are faring on different indicators. Therefore, exploration of data far beyond the whole of municipality level is provided in this report to better understand and look to support the areas within the Shire where concerns for children and young people may be greatest.

The strongest areas
Compared to the Victorian average, more children and/or young people across the Shire overall are:

- enrolled to attend available 4 year old kindergarten programs
- considered well-developed and ready when entering primary school
- considered “on track” for physical health, are socially competent and emotionally mature when entering primary school
- regularly attending primary school and secondary school
- meeting or above national minimum numeracy standards in Year 3, 5 and 9
- from homes where a good work-life balance is reported and there are fewer single parent families

When compared to the State, a similar amount of children and/or young people across the Shire are:

- being fully breastfed at 6 months or partially breastfed at 3 months
- receiving immunisations in line with the recommended schedule
- considered “on track” for language and cognitive skills and in terms of communication and general knowledge when entering primary school
- meeting or above national minimum reading standards in Year 3
- meeting or above national minimum numeracy standards in Year 7
- recorded as receiving youth unemployment benefits

The weakest areas
Compared to the Victorian average, a large proportion of children and/or young people across the Shire overall are:

- not being fully breastfed at 3 months or partially breastfed at 6 months
- not attending each of the Key Age and Stage visits with Maternal and Child Health (MCH) nurses
- living in households experiencing family violence
- failing to perform at or above national minimum reading standards in Year 5, 7 and 9
- not completing Year 12 schooling

The unknown areas
Due to the large number of data gaps, it is unclear how children across the Shire, or within specific locations within it, are performing compared to the State in relation to:

- regular healthy eating and gaining recommended amounts of exercise
- living in households with stable, positive mental health
- receiving support where children or young people have additional needs
- reading with parents on a regular basis
- attending 3 year old kindergarten
- feeling positive about school
- having secure housing or are earning or learning at age 15 to 19 years

My favourite thing about living on the Mornington Peninsula is living near the sea.

Abby, age 11
Rationale for an Indicators Report

During 2014, in response to the broad policy context, the need for an updated municipal early years plan, an awareness of the national and state agendas and resource opportunities driving a strategic focus on improving outcomes for young children and their families, Mornington Peninsula Shire (MPS) made a decision to develop a responsive, connected and effective early years sector to facilitate outcomes for children across the Shire.

The established Best Start Partnership was renewed and refreshed and a Mornington Peninsula Early Years Strategic Partnership was created to provide strategic leadership across the whole of the early year’s sector, with the aim of ensuring that both existing services and activities, and new initiatives are coordinated and responsive to the needs of local children and their families.

In the early days of the planning and governance discussions, the Partnership was encouraged by the work of the City of Greater Bendigo and the creation of the State of Bendigo’s Children Report (St. Luke’s Anglicare, 2011); and also the State of Victoria’s Children 2012: Early Childhood report released by the Victorian Department of Education and Early Childhood Development (DEECD, 2012). The Partnership made a commitment to work towards the creation of such a benchmark report for the Mornington Peninsula Shire to provide a clear picture of how children aged from 0-12 years and their families are faring on key indicators relative to those residing in other municipalities across Victoria.

Agreeing on outcome areas of focus

This State of Mornington Peninsula’s Children report reflects the output of much debate and discussion amongst the Partnership and articulates the shared outcomes of the group. The content has been the result of many months of collection, examination and analysis across a range of data sources pertaining to key health, wellbeing and developmental indicators.

With this in mind, the four key outcome areas selected and reported on in this report are:
1. Being healthy
2. Building wellbeing
3. Learning and developing
4. Staying safe

Exploring the evidence for selected indicators

Indicators specific to each of the four key outcomes areas defined above, and as relevant for the Shire, were identified, noting links to the DEECD Early Years Outcomes Framework. Considerable effort has been made to obtain accurate and reliable data for selected key indicators within each of the key outcomes areas.

In the main, data reported within the Social Health Atlases of Australia (created by the Public Health Information Development Unit), the Victorian Child and Adolescent Monitoring System (VCAMS) and the 2013 Report Card prepared by the Australian Research Alliance for Children and Youth (ARACY) have each been used, together with internal Shire data.
**Points to note:**

**Data aggregation:**
Given the geographical size and social isolation/complexities of the Shire as a whole, the Partnership agreed that simply presenting data at the Shire level would somewhat ‘muddy’ the picture and mask concerns that many stakeholders have regarding how children and families are tracking in some areas relative to others. Therefore, the data presented here has, where possible, been obtained or desegregated into township level and aggregated to Council ward level; with data reflecting the following wards: Briars, Cerberus, Nepean, Red Hill, Seawinds and Watson. While it is agreed that there is still a crudeness to this approach, exploration at this level gives an insight into the areas in which concerns regarding aspects of children’s health, wellbeing and development are greatest.

**Data gaps:**
Where appropriate and reliable data could not be sourced or available data does not provide the level of disaggregation required, data at the Shire level has been provided. Holding true to the value of the selected indicators, such data gaps have been acknowledged and it is anticipated in time, the capacity to address some of these gaps will increase.

**Target group:**
This report seeks to present data on children from birth through to 12 years of age. While the Victorian Government’s *Early Years Outcomes Framework* is focused on children from 0-8 years, the MPS Early Years Strategic Partnership agreed to extend the focus of this indicators report to 12 years, noting the gap in strategic planning that can occur for children in these four years.

**Voice of the child:**
Throughout the report, images drawn by local children are presented. These reflect the voice of children across several early education and care services in the Shire when they were invited to draw what they felt when asked “I feel happy when...”, “I feel healthy when ....” “I feel safe when...” and “my favourite thing about the Peninsula is...”

**Report structure:**
This report is divided into four sections to reflect the key outcome areas and the indicators within each. For each section, the key outcome areas are described and data and detail for each indicator within this outcome area is provided. The Victorian estimate for the indicator is provided on the left, and using a traffic light structure, the data for the Shire or Council ward level is provided; either on the right or in map form. A green light indicates that the Shire or the defined area is performing better than the state average; an orange light indicates there is little difference between the Shire and the state average; and a red light indicates the Shire or the defined area is performing worse that the state average.

**Next steps:**

**Value of the report in strategic planning**
The creation of this report will assist with broader strategic planning and support the Mornington Peninsula Early Years Strategic Partnership in the creation and monitoring of a new Municipal Early Years *Strategic Plan* that will guide pro-active strategic change at the local level to support children and families in the future. This will include reflection and links to the strategies within the Shire’s broader Strategic Plan, Best Start program requirements, the *DEECDs Early Years Strategic Plan* (2014) and other key policy documents.

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I feel happy when I go down to the beach

Eliza, age 9
The Mornington Peninsula Shire covers approximately 720 square kilometres of land with a coastline that extends over 190 kilometres and encompasses approximately 10% of Victoria’s coastline. The region is one of Melbourne’s premier holiday and retirement destinations and has magnificent landscapes, coasts and beaches that are of state significance and attract millions of visitors every year.
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The Shire’s children and young people

**Current population**
At the 2011 Census, close to one third of the Mornington Peninsula’s population were children and young people under the age of 24 (29.6%; 42,815). This included babies and pre-schoolers (0 to 4 years; 5.8%), primary schoolers (5-11 years; 8.8%), secondary schoolers (12-17 years; 7.6%), as well as those between 18 and 24 years (7.4%). Compared to Victoria, the proportion of children aged between 0 and 4 years is slightly lower (5.8% compared to 6.4%).

In 2011, the Mornington Peninsula Shire had an Australian Bureau of Statistics Index of Relative Socio-economic Disadvantage score of 1,022.5 compared to the Victorian average of 1,009.6 (where lower numbers reflect greater disadvantage), with lower scores reported in townships located in the Council Wards of Seawinds, Watson and Cerberus. This data supports anecdotal evidence that there are a significant number of children and young people living in pockets of the Shire that are experiencing concentrated disadvantage relative to others.

The following table depicts the number of children and young people by Council ward as per the 2011 Census. This illustrates that the largest number of young children across the Shire reside in the wards of the Briars and Seawinds, followed by Watson and Cerberus.

**Projected population**
Projected growth of 3,500 children and young people from 0 to 14 years across the Shire has been forecast for 2031, with the greatest growth for children below 15 years forecast in the wards of Briars, Cerberus and Watson.

At a township level, forecast increases in children and young people are most prominent for townships of Mount Martha and Mornington, Hastings and Crib Point, followed by Rosebud/Rosebud West (despite overall drop in number of children across the Seawinds ward).

**Table 1: Population of children and young people in Mornington Peninsula by Council Ward compared to Victoria (2011)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Nepean</th>
<th>Seawinds</th>
<th>Briars</th>
<th>Watson</th>
<th>Cerberus</th>
<th>Red Hill</th>
<th>Mornington Peninsula</th>
<th>Victoria</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0-4 years</td>
<td>141</td>
<td>2,193</td>
<td>3,474</td>
<td>1,028</td>
<td>1,129</td>
<td>453</td>
<td>8,418</td>
<td>351,951</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5-9 years</td>
<td>185</td>
<td>2,139</td>
<td>3,931</td>
<td>1,083</td>
<td>1,105</td>
<td>521</td>
<td>8,964</td>
<td>332,729</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10-14 years</td>
<td>155</td>
<td>2,113</td>
<td>4,000</td>
<td>1,215</td>
<td>1,067</td>
<td>555</td>
<td>9,105</td>
<td>330,055</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>+ 15 years</td>
<td>3,581</td>
<td>34,670</td>
<td>46,597</td>
<td>13,198</td>
<td>12,895</td>
<td>7,151</td>
<td>118,092</td>
<td>1,014,736</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total population</td>
<td>4,062</td>
<td>41,115</td>
<td>58,002</td>
<td>16,524</td>
<td>16,196</td>
<td>8,680</td>
<td>144,579</td>
<td>5,537,817</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**SEIFA Index**
1,050.2 978.4 1,068.7 1,018.4 1,028.1 1,080.2 1022.5 1009.6

Source: Census of Population and Housing, 2011; Victoria in Future, 2014

**Table 2: Predicted population change (number) of children and young people in Mornington Peninsula by Council Ward by 2031**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Nepean</th>
<th>Seawinds</th>
<th>Briars</th>
<th>Watson</th>
<th>Cerberus</th>
<th>Red Hill</th>
<th>Mornington Peninsula</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0-4 years</td>
<td>+71</td>
<td>-332</td>
<td>+761</td>
<td>+175</td>
<td>+378</td>
<td>+5</td>
<td>+1,058</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5-9 years</td>
<td>+60</td>
<td>-142</td>
<td>+713</td>
<td>+162</td>
<td>+398</td>
<td>+33</td>
<td>+1,224</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10-14 years</td>
<td>+113</td>
<td>-29</td>
<td>+780</td>
<td>+91</td>
<td>+386</td>
<td>+61</td>
<td>+1,402</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>+ 15 years</td>
<td>+641</td>
<td>+14,117</td>
<td>+14,358</td>
<td>+2,144</td>
<td>+4,600</td>
<td>+1,543</td>
<td>+37,403</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total population</td>
<td>+885</td>
<td>+13,614</td>
<td>+16,612</td>
<td>+2,572</td>
<td>+5,762</td>
<td>+1,642</td>
<td>+41,087</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Census of Population and Housing Forecasts, 2011; Victoria in Future, 2014
All children in the Shire are born and remain healthy, develop positive health behaviours and achieve optimal health

“While some health outcomes are determined prior to birth and early on, through immunisation and breastfeeding for example, children learn behaviours in their early years that have lasting impacts on their physical and psychological health as adults. There is an opportunity in these early years to reinforce positive behaviours such as physical activity and healthy diet to set strong foundations for their future wellbeing” (DEECD, 2014, p14).

“I feel healthy when I eat fruit”
Isabella, age 6
1. Children have a healthy start in life

It is widely accepted that birth weight is a good indicator of general health and a strong predictor of overall infant survival and child health, development and wellbeing. On the flip side, low birth weight is often attributed to premature births or small for gestational age, posing higher duration hospital stays and increased possibility of developmental delay, illness and death (DEECD, 2014).

Low birth weight infants

Fortunately for children living in the Shire, the proportion of low birth weight infants across the Shire is slightly lower than the state and national average — which both sit at around 6%.

Data: Proportion of babies of low birth weight
Source: ARACY 2013 and Social Health Atlas 2011

Infant deaths

Infant mortality has declined in Victoria over recent years, with 2.8 deaths per 1,000 live births recorded for Victoria in 2012. A comparative number was recorded across the Shire during 2013.

Data: Rate of infant deaths per 1,000 live births
Source: Social Health Atlas 2012

Infants fully breastfed at 3 months

While just over a half of Victoria's children were reported to be fully breastfed at 3 months during 2012-13, the rate across the Shire was lower (45%) with variation across the Council wards. Breastfeeding rates at 3 months were higher than the Shire average for the Briars ward, increasing to over 70% for both Nepean and Red Hill wards.

Data: Proportion of infants fully breastfed at 3 months
Source: DEECD MCH Annual Report 2012/13, MPS MCH Team

It is well documented that breastfeeding provides nutrition and strengthens a child's immune system, providing lasting benefits for both mothers and their babies, with both the World Health Organisation (WHO) and the National Health and Medical Research Council (NHMRC) recommending that babies are breastfed until at least 6 months of age (DEECD, 2014).
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Infants partially breastfed at 3 months

The rate for infants partially breastfed at 3 months were lower for the Shire compared to the state average for 2012-13, with variation across the council wards. It is noted that for the wards of Briars, Nepean and Red Hill, the combination of partial breastfeeding rates together with full breast feeding rates places the number of children breastfed at 3 months above the combined state average.

Data: Proportion of infants partially breastfed at 3 months
Source: DEECD MCH Annual Report 2012/13, MPS MCH Team

INDICATOR: Increase in proportion of infants who are breastfed

Infants fully breastfed at 6 months

Breastfeeding rates at 6 months of age were similar for both the Shire and state average; reported as 34% for 2012-13. This rate reflects a pattern that has remained stable for the past five years. Variation is noted across the Council wards, with breastfeeding rates at 6 months higher than both the MPS and the state average for the wards of Briars, Nepean and Red Hill.

Data: Proportion of infants fully breastfed at 6 months
Source: DEECD MCH Annual Report 2012/13, MPS MCH Team

INDICATOR: Increase in proportion of infants who are breastfed

Infants partially breastfed at 6 months

The rate for infants partially breastfed at 6 months are considerably lower for the Shire compared to the state average for 2012-13, with variation across the council wards. It is noted that for the wards of Nepean and Red Hill, the combination of partial breastfeeding rates together with full breast feeding rates places the number of children breastfed at 6 months above the combined State average.

Data: Proportion of infants partially breastfed at 6 months
Source: DEECD MCH Annual Report 2012/13, MPS MCH Team

INDICATOR: Increase in proportion of infants who are breastfed

“I feel healthy when I eat carrots”

Callan, age 5
Research states that vaccination is an effective means of creating a society that has strong immunity and protection against infectious disease; with evidence suggesting that at least 90% vaccination coverage is required to effectively reduce the spread of such diseases (Lister, McIntyre and Burgess, and O’Brien, 1999).

**Children fully immunised at age 12-15 months (1 year)**

Data indicates that Victorian rates are just meeting the 90% vaccination coverage amount for children aged 12-15 months, with the rates for the Shire reported to be similar to the State average. At the Council ward level, the rates of children fully immunised at 1 year of age are higher in the Nepean ward, yet slightly lower in Cerberus and considerably lower in Red Hill.

**Data: Proportion of children fully immunised at 12-15 months**

Source: Department of Health 2011/12, Australian Immunisation Register 2013

**Children fully immunised at age 24-27 months (2 years)**

Data indicates that Victorian rates are meeting the 90% vaccination coverage amount for children aged 24-27 months, with the rates for the Shire are similar to the State average. At the Council ward level, the rates of children fully immunised at 2 years of age are higher in the Cerberus ward, yet considerably lower in Red Hill.

**Data: Proportion of children fully immunised at 24-27 months**

Source: Department of Health 2011/12, Australian Immunisation Register 2013

**Children fully immunised at age 60-63 months (5 years)**

Once again, data indicates that Victorian rates are meeting the 90% vaccination coverage amount for children aged 60-63 months, with the rates for the Shire are similar to the State average.

At the Council ward level, there is variation in the rates across areas; with some changes in those with higher or lower rates compared to the rates at the earlier age group. For example, by 5 years of age children in Watson, Cerberus and Seawinds are more likely to be fully immunised compared to children in Red Hill or Nepean wards, where the rates fall below 90%.

**Data: Proportion of children fully immunised at 60-63 months**

Source: Department of Health 2011/12, Australian Immunisation Register 2013
2. Children are supported to grow and develop

*In Victoria, the Maternal and Child Health service offers a universal service to all children and their parents, from the very first weeks of life. Ten Key Age and Stage (KAS) consultations are offered from birth to 3.5 years of age to ensure the health and development of children is monitored and opportunities to provide support and connection with child and early year’s services are maximised. In Victoria, the take-up of these KAS visits during the first year of life is strong, with a gradual and continual decline with age (DEECD, 2012).*

### Children have had their 4 month Key Ages and Stages visit

Data for 2012/13 indicates the take-up of the 4 month KAS visit was lower in the Shire compared to the Victorian average. The wards of Watson and Briars reflect rates comparable to the Shire average, however for several other wards across the Southern Peninsula the take-up rate was low between 75-80%.

**Data: Proportion of children having had their 4 month KAS visit**

**Source:** DEECD MCH Annual Report and MPS MCH 2012/13

### Children have had their 12 month Key Ages and Stages visit

Data for 2012/13 indicates the take-up of the 12 month KAS visit was considerably lower in the Shire compared to the Victorian average. Again, the wards of Watson and Briars reflect rates comparable to the Shire average, however for several other wards across the Southern Peninsula the take-up rate was lower; with rates between 62-75%

**Data: Proportion of children having had their 12 month KAS visit**

**Source:** DEECD MCH Annual Report and MPS MCH 2012/13

### Children have had their 18 month Key Ages and Stages visit

As child age increases, data for 2012/13 indicates the KAS visit take up rate across the Shire continued to decline and move further away from the state average. The take-up rate of 18 month KAS visits were considerably lower in the Shire compared to the Victorian average.

Again, the wards of Watson and Briars reflect rates comparable to the already low Shire average, however for several other wards across the Southern Peninsula, the take-up rates dropped to between 45%-60%. Interestingly, the rate for Red Hill was 100%.

**Data: Proportion of children having had their 18 month KAS visit**

**Source:** DEECD MCH Annual Report and MPS MCH 2012/13
Children have had their
2 year Key Ages and Stages visit

At 2 years of age, the KAS visit take up rate across the Shire for 2012/13 was higher than for 18 months, however it still sits below state average. The rates for both Watsons and Red Hill were higher than the Shire average, with the rate sitting at 88%.

**Data:** Proportion of children having had their 2 year KAS visit

**Source:** DEECD MCH Annual Report and MPS MCH 2012/13

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**INDICATOR:** Increase in the proportion of children attending MCH Key Age and Stages visits

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Children have had their
3.5 year Key Ages and Stages visit

At the 3.5 year KAS visit, the Shire again reflected rates below the state average; however the gap was smaller than at the 12 month, 18 month or 2 year visit. The data indicated a significantly higher rate of visits for children in this age group for the wards of Nepean, Sea Winds and Red Hill; perhaps reflective of the recent focus of Council in working collaboratively with kindergartens and long day care centres in these areas to improve the ways in which KAS visits can be accessed.

**NB:** The rate for Nepean ward includes data for visits also conducted at several kindergartens and long day care centres and therefor the total is greater than 100% – due to this inflated estimate, this rate has not been included in the overall Shire average.

**Data:** Proportion of children having had their 3.5 year KAS visit

**Source:** DEECD MCH Annual Report and MPS MCH 2012/13

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**INDICATOR:** Increase in the proportion of children attending MCH Key Age and Stages visits

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3. Children have a healthy and physically active childhood

Whilst children and young people fare moderately well on overall health relative to other OECD countries, “the evidence shows that a persistent and marked health inequality between child populations” (ARACY, 2013, p12); with children from lower socioeconomic areas, from indigenous background and from rural and remote communities consistently demonstrating poorer health outcomes on various measures.

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Children have good dental hygiene

There is an absence of robust data collected at the child level to create a clear picture as to the number of children with good oral health or dental hygiene across the Shire.

As a proxy, data taken from the Student Entrant Health Questionnaire, a survey that is completed by parents when their child starts school, suggested that around 12% of parents across the Shire who completed the survey in 2013, reported concerns with their child’s oral health; with 15% for all Victorian parents who completed the survey sharing concerns in this area.

**Data:** Proportion of parents not concerned with oral health

**Source:** DEECD Student Entrant Health Questionnaire, 2013

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**INDICATOR:** Direct link unclear

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Evidence has linked a range of serious medical conditions to obesity, including insulin resistance, diabetes, cardiovascular disease, liver disease, low self-esteem and isolation issues. However, there is an absence of robust data collected at the child level to create a clear picture as to the number of children who are either overweight or obese in the Shire. As a proxy, parent reports from the Student Entrant Health Questionnaire in 2013 suggested that around 99% of Shire parents who completed the survey reported their child is of healthy weight, with this sitting at 98% for all Victorian parents who completed the survey. Based on parental report of weight on entry to school, Shire rates are similar to the Victorian average, reflecting a high proportion of parents perceiving their child’s weight on entry to school as ‘healthy’.

**Data:** Proportion of children reported by parents to be of healthy weight on entry to school
**Source:** DEECD Student Entrant Health Questionnaire, 2013

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As is the case with dental hygiene and healthy weight, there is an absence of robust data collected at the child level to create a clear picture as to the number of children who are in excellent or very good health across the shire. As a proxy, parent reports from the Student Entrant Health Questionnaire in 2013 suggested that around 85% of Shire parents who completed the survey reported their child as being in excellent or very good health when they commenced school, with this sitting at 89% for all Victorian parents who completed the survey.

**Data:** Proportion of children reported by parents to be in excellent to very good health
**Source:** DEECD Student Entrant Health Questionnaire, 2013

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“I feel happy when I go to the park with my sister.”

Georgia, age 4
Healthy eating is linked with overall health and wellbeing, energy and fitness. Further, the new 2013 dietary guidelines recommend that: children aged 2-3 years eat 2.5 serves of vegetables and one serve of fruit per day (where a serve equals one cup or a medium piece of fruit); children 4-8 years eat 4.5 serves of vegetables and 1.5 serves of fruit per day and children aged 9-11 years consume 5 serves of vegetables and 2 serves of fruit per day.

Despite new dietary guidelines released by the National Health and Medical Research Council (NHMRC) in 2013, data reflecting access to and consumption of healthy food by children is not currently collected in routine government data collection processes. While it is promising that the results from the 2011 Victorian Population Health Survey suggest that a significantly greater proportion of adults across the Shire were meeting the previous (2003) dietary guidelines compared to adults across the State (8.5% compared to 5.2%), survey data to validate compliance with the new guidelines is not yet available. Exploration of opportunities to obtain data relating to the consumption of healthy food by children across the Shire will be of interest in the future.

The Australian Government, Department of Health and Ageing provide clear guidelines regarding the minimum amount of physical activity required by children and young people to experience positive health benefits. Guidelines for physical activity and sedentary behaviour and screen time are offered for children from birth through to adolescence (2014). The guidelines recommend that supervised floor play is encouraged for infants, that toddlers and pre-school aged children accumulate at least 3 hours of physical activity every day (and no more than 1 hour of screen time) with children aged 5-12 years to accumulate at least 60 minutes of moderate to vigorous physical activity every day (and no more than 2 hours of screen time).

At present there is an absence of robust data collected at the state or local level to evidence the amount of physical activity children of different age groups are accumulating, for the Shire or any other local area. The Shire is aware of and interested in the 2014 Report Card on physical activity for children and young people that Active Healthy Kids Australia has drafted. This Report Card outlines opportunities to better measure physical behaviour that contribute to physical activity levels in the future, noting the need for various tools and core metrics to be developed to measure participation in organised sport, physical education and physical activity in schools, active play, active transportation and sedentary behaviour.
All children in the Shire develop socially and emotionally, are resilient and have a strong sense of identity and wellbeing.

“Children develop as a result of growing the interactions between their genes and the environment. Relationships, interactions and everyday encounters in the early years provide the foundation for later development. Positive early experiences result in optimal brain development, and this in turn provides a solid foundation for children to build all the other skills and abilities they need for success at school and life” (AEDI Facts Sheet, 2013, p3)

“I feel happy when I’m with my mum and dad” Nixon, age 9
4. Children are ‘on-track’ and developing well by age 6

Children well developed by the first year of school

Based on 2012 data, 82% of children across the Shire were considered to be well-developed (or on-track) compared to 80% of communities across the state. Despite this proportion being slightly higher than the state average there was clear variation between communities across the Shire, with a higher proportion for children in Nepean, Red Hill and Briars considered to be developing well by the first year of school relative to those in Seawinds, Watson and Cerberus.

Data: Proportion of children considered well-developed or ‘on-track’ – above the 25th percentile
Source: MPS AEDI Community Profile 2012

INDICATOR: Increase in the proportion of children not vulnerable on one or more domains

Children ‘on-track’ for physical health and well being

Data indicated that 83% of children in MPS were considered to be physically ready for school in 2012, compared to 81% of children across the state. Conversely, the data showed that 17% of children across the Shire reflected signs of being developmentally at risk (below 25th percentile) or developmentally vulnerable (below 10th percentile) on this domain; defined as being less physically ready for the school day (being dressed inappropriately, tired or hungry), less physically independent and having less developed gross and fine motor skills.

Exploration at the ward level revealed that a considerably lower proportion of children in the wards of Watson and Red Hill performed well on this domain compared to the wards of Nepean and Briars.

Data: Proportion of children considered ‘on-track’ for physical health and wellbeing
Source: MPS AEDI Community Profile 2012

INDICATOR: Increase in the proportion of children on track for physical health and wellbeing

Children ‘on-track’ for social competence and well being

Data indicated that 82% of children in the Shire were considered to be socially competent by the first years of school in 2012, compared to 79% of children across the state. Conversely, the data showed that 18% of children across the Shire reflected signs of being developmentally at risk (below 25th percentile) or developmentally vulnerable (below 10th percentile) on this domain; defined as lacking overall social competence, experiencing difficulty showing respect and responsibility, having difficulties in learning activities and complying with classroom requirements and may show disinterest in exploring new things.

Exploration at the ward level revealed that a considerably lower proportion of children in the wards of Watson and Seawinds performed well on this domain compared to the wards of Nepean, Briars and Red Hill.

Data: Proportion of children considered ‘on-track’ for social competence and wellbeing
Source: MPS AEDI Community Profile 2012

INDICATOR: Increase in the proportion of children on track socially and emotionally
Children ‘on-track’ for emotional maturity

Data indicates that 82% of children in MPS were considered to be emotionally ready for school in 2012, compared to 79% of children across the state. Conversely, the data indicated that 18% of children across the Shire reflected signs of being developmentally at risk (below 25th percentile) or developmentally vulnerable (below 10th percentile) on this domain; defined as lacking prosocial and helping behaviours, feeling anxious and fearful, exhibiting aggressive behaviour or showing hyperactive or inattentive tendencies.

Exploration at the ward level revealed that a considerably lower proportion of children in Seawinds ward performed well on this domain compared to the wards of Nepean, Briars and Red Hill.

Data: Proportion of children considered ‘on-track’ for emotional maturity
Source: MPS AEDI Community Profile 2012

5. Families have time for children and young people

The importance of time spent with children and young people playing, reading, socialising and just ‘being’ is well understood and yet often difficult to achieve and impacted on by changing family structures, increasing workloads, variation in access to family-friendly workplaces and parental mental health more generally.

Good work / life balance

Based on Community Indicators Victoria Wellbeing Report 2012, 57% of parents across the Shire reported good work/life balance compared to 53% for the state as a whole. Data at the ward or township level is not available.

Data: Proportion of families reporting good work/life balance.
Source: Community Indicators Victoria Wellbeing Report 2012

Single parent families with children aged under 15 years

Despite more than half of parents across the Shire reporting good work / life balance, a slightly higher proportion of single parents families with children aged under 15 years reside in the Shire relative to the rest of the state. Single parent families often face additional challenges and limitations on time, being required to take on the dual role of parenting and requiring additional support from children in the household rather than simply spending that time with their children.

Data: Proportion of single parent families with children. Data not available beyond LGA level
Source: ABS Census 2011
6. Children and young people have good mental health

Good mental health is recognised as a precursor to social development, academic success and improved life chances. Whilst good mental health is desirable for children, young people and families’ right across the state, at present there is a gap in available data to support the extent to which this is being achieved.

7. Children and young people are supported by positive relationships

Positive and secure relationships both with parents within the home and within the broader community serve as a strong foundation for the construction of a child’s identity – supporting them to identify who they are, where they belong and how they influence and contribute to the world.

8. Children and young people are connected to and active in their community

Playgroups provide valuable opportunities for young children to develop through play, offer support to parents to create closer relationships with their children and build connected communities and strong parent networks.

Across the Shire, more than 60 playgroups were available to families throughout 2012/13, with more than 860 families choosing to enrol in these opportunities. On average, around 20 children attended one or more of these sessions per week, with the total number of children attending a session over the year at almost 1700. Comparative data for Victoria was not available at the time of preparing this report.

Data: Number of families (F) enrolled to attend playgroup per year and average number of children (C) attending sessions per week
Source: MPS MCH Data 2012/13

INDICATOR: Increase in the proportion of children living in neighbourhoods with good access to playgroups, parks and playgrounds.
All children in the Shire learn and develop through engaging in meaningful, high quality educational experiences.

“Ability gaps between advantaged and other children open up early before schooling begins... children who start ahead keep accelerating past their peers, widening the gap... Early advantages accumulate, so do early disadvantages... the best way to improve the schools is to improve the early environment of the children”
(Professor James J. Heckman 2008)
Children on-track for language and cognitive skills

Data indicated that 82% of children in the Shire were considered to be on-track for language and cognitive skills based on the 2012 AEDI, similar to the proportion of children across the state. Conversely, the data showed that 18% of children across the Shire reflected signs of being developmentally at risk (below 25th percentile) or developmentally vulnerable (below 10th percentile) on this domain; defined as lacking basic literacy skills, showing lesser interest in literacy and basic numeracy skill. Exploration at the ward level revealed that a considerably lower proportion of children in the Cerberus ward performed well on this domain compared to the wards of Nepean, Briars and Red Hill where rates above the Shire average were noted.

Data: Proportion of children considered ‘on-track’ for language and cognitive skill
Source: MPS AEDI Community Profile 2012

INDICATOR: Increase in the proportion of children on track for speech and language. Increase in the proportion of children on track for learning and cognitive development

Children on-track for communication and general knowledge

Data indicated that 79% of children in the Shire were considered to be on-track for communication and general knowledge based on the 2012 AEDI, similar to the proportion of children across the state. Conversely, the data showed that 21% of children across the Shire reflected signs of being developmentally at risk (below 25th percentile) or developmentally vulnerable (below 10th percentile) on this domain; defined as lacking communication skills, exhibiting difficulties playing games using language, being difficult to understand or have difficulty understanding others. Exploration at the ward level revealed that a considerably lower proportion of children in the wards of Cerberus and Watson performed well on this domain compared to the wards of Nepean, Briars and Red Hill where rates above the Shire average were noted.

Data: Proportion of children considered ‘on-track’ for communication and general knowledge
Source: MPS AEDI Community Profile 2012

INDICATOR: Increase in the proportion of children on track for speech and language.
Increase in the proportion of children on track for learning and cognitive development

I feel happy when I go fishing

Seth, age 5
Active participation in sport, cultural and community based activities and programs outside of the school environment allows children and young people to build relationships and social networks with peers, and develop resilience, confidence and independence needed for life.

INDICATOR: Increase in the proportion of children living in neighbourhoods with good access to playgroups, parks and playgrounds

"My favourite thing about living on the Mornington Peninsula is the sporting events."

Samuel, age 9

10. Families are supportive of and engaged in learning

There is widespread understanding of the benefit of parents being supportive of a child’s learning and participating in the school environment. Supporting activities such as reading, drawing, counting, assisting with homework and encouraging and being involved in physical activities all present key opportunities for parents to support children to learn, with lasting impacts on school attendance, academic success and longer term life aspirations.

Parents reading to children at home everyday

Parents participating in schools

Parents participating in early learning and care experiences

Ideally, robust data on the extent to which parents read to children each day and participate in both early learning and care settings and schools would strengthen our understanding of both the extent to which this occurs and indeed the impact on children.

In Victoria, whilst a question was asked in a statewide survey in 2006 about reading, reporting 43% of children 13 years or under were read to by parents almost every day, currently there is an absence of data at the local level. There is also an absence of data on which to indicate the extent to which parents participate in school or early education and care settings to support children’s learning.

INDICATOR: Increase in the proportion of children that are read to by a family member everyday

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11. Children are involved in early learning and care

“Participating in quality preschool programs is considered to be beneficial for children in a number of ways, including better intellectual development and independence, sociability and concentration, cognitive development in the short term and preparation for success in school” (DEECD, 2012, p38)

Across the Shire, access and participation to early childhood education and care is considered vital to enabling children to perform well at school and gain skills that will set them up for life, with the National Partnership Agenda on Universal Access to Early Childhood Education ensuring “every child has access to a quality early childhood education program in the 12 months before full-time schooling for 15 hours per week, 40 weeks per year, delivered by a 4 year degree qualified early childhood teacher” (COAG, 2013, p2). Further, the Shire supports the delivery of early childhood education services for families by providing community infrastructure and Kindergarten Central Registration and owns and maintains 27 kindergarten buildings.

### Early learning and care attendance at age 4

Data indicated that 98% of Victorian children were enrolled for state funded kindergarten programs in the year before school, with data indicating that more than 100% of children across the Shire as a whole were enrolled in 2013. Investigation of the number of children enrolled in kindergarten programs delivered in the 27 Council buildings are depicted here at the ward level. This indicates a high proportion of enrolments for the Nepean ward and lower rates for the other wards. However, these rates do not include children enrolled to attend other services in the Shire that provide funded 4-year old kindergarten services – with the Shire boasting more than ten long day care centres, four independent schools, and one kindergarten owned by the Department of Defence.

With the review and redevelopment of the Kindergarten Central Registration process, as part of the 10 year Kindergarten Strategy for the Shire, internal Council data will be enhanced, allowing for further planning and ensuring that community infrastructure is used effectively.

**Data: Proportion of children enrolled in early learning and care programs at age 4 years**

**Source:** VCAMS 2012, MPS Kindergarten Central Registration Data 2013

**INDICATOR:** Increase in proportion of children participating in quality early childhood education and care services

### Early learning and care enrolment at age 3

Whilst state funding exists to support universal access to kindergarten for all 4 year old children in Victoria in the year before formal schooling, there is limited funding to support the education and care of children at age 3 with funding limited to children of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander decent or those known to child protection (as eligible under the Early Start Kindergarten subsidy). As a result, the decision to enrol children in 3 year old education and care opportunities is optional, reliant on family situation and needs and subsequently data evidencing the extent of enrolments across the state and within the Shire is varied and not collected by a single source.

It is anticipated that as the Shire’s Kindergarten Central Registration process now applies to 3 year old kindergarten services managed by Council, the data collected by this process will provide more robust evidence of the take-up of these programs in the future.

**INDICATOR:** – Increase in proportion of children participating in quality early childhood education and care services
Whilst participation rates in Shire managed kindergarten programs have increased since 2008, 4 year old kindergarten enrolments in alternative settings (e.g. long day care or integrated children’s services) recorded in 2012 were considerably lower than that seen in Victoria (13% in MP shire vs 23% in Victoria). It is highlighted again that improved practices for collating service use data for long day care and integrated children’s’ centres, and combining this with data for services operating in Shire owned buildings, will provide more accurate picture of overall 4 year old kindergarten enrolment across different locations within the Shire.

Data: Proportion of children enrolled in long day care or integrated children’s service at age 4. Data not available beyond LGA level
Source: VCAMS 2012

**INDICATOR: Increase in proportion of children participating in quality early childhood education and care services**

### 12. Children and young people are attending and achieving at school

The Victorian government advocates that attendance patterns are established early, with the belief that missing days in kindergarten and early primary will often carry through life, with these children more likely to miss classes in later years of schooling and risk academic success. “Going to school every day is the single most important part of a child’s education. Students learn new things every day and missing school puts them behind” (DEECD, Every Day Counts Initiative 2013)

**Attendance rate at primary school**

Attendance data taken from the Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority (ACARA) reported that 2011 attendance rates at government and catholic primary schools across the Shire was higher than the state average, with little variation across wards when data was aggregated across schools despite awareness that the attendance rates for individual schools varies considerably.

Data: Reported primary school attendance rate (at state and catholic schools)
Source: ACARA 2011, myschool website 2013

**INDICATOR: Increase in average rates of student attendance at primary school**

**Attendance rate at secondary school**

Attendance data, once again taken from the ACARA reported that 2011 attendance rates at government and catholic secondary schools across the Shire was higher than the state average, with little variation across wards when data was aggregated across schools despite awareness that the attendance rates for individual schools varies considerably.

Data: Reported secondary school attendance rate (at state and catholic schools)
Source: ACARA 2011, myschool website 2013

**INDICATOR: Increase in average rates of student attendance at primary school**
The following National Assessment Program – Literacy and Numeracy (NAPLAN) data presents data across several cohorts; Victoria as compared to the Shire (based on data for government schools only as provided by DEECD) and then individual Council wards where data was aggregated. While this data indicates how children fare over time it does not reflect that some children perform better or worse with increased years at school and show growth at the individual level.

**Students achieving minimum national standards – Year 3 READING NAPLAN**

Results indicated that 97% of the Year 3 children attending government schools across the Shire were performing at or above national minimum reading standards for this year level in 2013, equal to the State average of 97%. When data was explored at the ward level, a higher proportion of government school students were at or above the national minimum standards in Year 3 in the wards of Nepean and Red Hill, with the proportion falling just below the State average for Watson and Cerberus.

**Data: Proportion of students achieving minimum national standards – Year 3 READING NAPLAN**

Source: Victorian NAPLAN 2013, DEECD government school data 2012

**INDICATOR: Increase in proportion of students achieving national minimum standards in NAPLAN**

**Students achieving minimum national standards – Year 5 READING NAPLAN**

Results indicated that 92% of the Year 5 children attending government schools across the Shire were performing at or above national minimum reading standards for this year level in 2013, lower than the state average of 97%. When data was explored at the ward level, a higher proportion of government school students were at or above the national minimum standards in Year 5 in the wards of Nepean, Seawinds and Red Hill, with the proportion falling below the State average for Watson and Cerberus.

**Data: Proportion of students achieving minimum national standards – Year 5 READING NAPLAN**

Source: Victorian NAPLAN 2013, DEECD government school data 2012

**INDICATOR: Increase in proportion of students achieving national minimum standards in NAPLAN**

**Students achieving minimum national standards – Year 7 READING NAPLAN**

Results indicated that 94% of the Year 7 children attending government schools across the Shire were performing at or above national minimum reading standards for this year level in 2013, lower than the State average.

When data was explored at the ward level, a higher proportion of government school students were at or above the national minimum standards in Year 7 in the wards of Briars and Seawinds, with the proportion falling below the State average for Watson and Cerberus. NB: There are no government secondary schools in the Nepean and Red Hill wards.

**Data: Proportion of students achieving minimum national standards – Year 7 READING NAPLAN**

Source: Victorian NAPLAN 2013, DEECD government school data 2012

**INDICATOR: Increase in proportion of students achieving national minimum standards in NAPLAN**
Students achieving minimum national standards – Year 9 READING NAPLAN

Results indicated that 91% of the Year 9 children attending government schools across the Shire were performing at or above national minimum reading standards for this year level in 2013, lower than the State average.
When data was explored at the ward level, a lower proportion of government school students were at or above the national minimum standards in Year 9 across the shire, with the proportion falling below the State average for Cerberus and Watson. NB: There are no government secondary schools in the Nepean and Red Hill wards.

Data: Proportion of students achieving minimum national standards – Year 9 READING NAPLAN
Source: Victorian NAPLAN 2013, DEECD government school data 2012

INDICATOR: Increase in proportion of students achieving national minimum standards in NAPLAN

Students achieving minimum national standards – Year 3 NUMERACY NAPLAN

Results indicated that 98% of the Year 3 children attending government schools across the Shire were performing at or above national minimum numeracy standards for this year level in 2013, higher than the State average.
When data was explored at the ward level, a higher proportion of government school students were at or above the national minimum standards in Year 3 in the majority of wards, with the exception of Cerberus where the proportion fell below the Shire and State average.

Data: Proportion of students achieving minimum national standards – Year 3 NUMERACY NAPLAN
Source: Victorian NAPLAN 2013, DEECD government school data 2012

INDICATOR: Increase in proportion of students achieving national minimum standards in NAPLAN

Students achieving minimum national standards – Year 5 NUMERACY NAPLAN

Results indicated that 96% of the Year 5 children attending government schools across the Shire were performing at or above national minimum numeracy standards for this year level in 2013, higher than the State average.
When data was explored at the ward level, a higher proportion of government school students were at or above the national minimum standards in Year 5 in the majority of wards, with the exception of Watson, where the proportion fell below the Shire and State average.

Data: Proportion of students achieving minimum national standards – Year 5 NUMERACY NAPLAN
Source: Victorian NAPLAN 2013, DEECD government school data 2012

INDICATOR: Increase in proportion of students achieving national minimum standards in NAPLAN
Results indicated that 96% of the Year 7 children attending government schools across the Shire were performing at or above national minimum numeracy standards for this year level in 2013, the same as the State average. When data was explored at the ward level, a higher proportion of government school students were at or above the national minimum standards in Year 7 in the wards of Briars and Seawinds, with the proportion falling below the State average for Watson. NB: There are no government secondary schools in the Nepean and Red Hill wards.

**Data:** Proportion of students achieving minimum national standards – Year 7 NUMERACY NAPLAN
**Source:** Victorian NAPLAN 2013, DEECD government school data 2012

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Results indicated that 95% of the Year 9 children attending government schools across the Shire were performing at or above national minimum numeracy standards for this year level in 2013, higher than the State average. When data was explored at the ward level, a higher proportion of government school students were at or above the national minimum standards in Year 9 in the Briars and Seawinds wards, with the proportion falling below the State average for Watson. NB: There are no government secondary schools in the Nepean and Red Hill wards.

**Data:** Proportion of students achieving minimum national standards – Year 9 NUMERACY NAPLAN
**Source:** Victorian NAPLAN 2013, DEECD government school data 2012

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In 2011, 84% of Victorian students completed Year 12, while the rate for students across the Shire sat at 81%. This means that almost 20% of young people across the municipality did not complete secondary school.

**Data:** Proportion of young people aged 19 years who have attained Year 12 or equivalent
**Source:** Skills Victoria and Victorian Curriculum and Assessment Authority, 2011

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“A vast body of literature confirms the value of school completion. Payoffs accrue over the lifetime of an individual in a variety of ways including improved career paths, improved health and welfare, and improved social interactions... Students from a background of disadvantage – those who stand to gain most from school completion in terms of improved financial and life outcomes – are over represented among early school leavers” (Deloitte Access Economics, 2012, p2).
13. Children and young people have access to and use of technology at home

Ever-developing technology is becoming increasingly integrated into many aspects of modern life and plays a fundamental role in facilitating education both within the school setting and at home. Research demonstrates that children and young people who have limited access to technology can experience fewer ways of learning, disadvantaging them in comparison with those who have the opportunity to utilise a range of technologies effectively.

People living in households with internet connections

As access and use of technologies in the home environment is difficult to quantify, the number of people living in households with internet connections has been offered as a proxy. Based on 2011 data, 71% of the total Shire population lived in households where internet connections were available, with this figure just below the State average (72%). The presence of an internet connection alone does not mean children and young people will necessarily have access to use a variety of technological opportunities to strengthen learning and development; further local level data is required to evidence this.

Data: Proportion of population living in households with home internet connections
Source: ABS Census data 2011

INDICATOR: Increase in proportion of children and young people living in supportive family environment

“I feel happy when mummy tickles me”
Tully, age 4

“My favourite thing about living on the Mornington Peninsula is we played jump off the sand dunes”
Claudia, age 4
All children in the Shire experience and grow up in safe environments and communities.

“Children and young people are vulnerable if the capacity of parents and family to effectively care, protect and provide for their long term development and wellbeing is limited ... There are many factors that can contribute to making a child vulnerable. These factors range from family stressors such as economic hardship through unemployment, business failure, gambling or homelessness through to other factors such as family violence, alcohol and substance misuse, mental health problems, disability and parental history of abuse and neglect.” (DEECD, 2013, p4)
14. Children and young people are safe in their own homes

**Rate of reported family violence incidents per 100,000 population**

In 2012/13 there were 1,100 cases of family violence per 100,000 population reported to the Police across the Shire, which is slightly higher than the Victorian average of 1,071 per 100,000 population. In 34% of these reports, a child was classified as present at the time of the incident. In comparison 30% of the reports for the state as a whole noted that a child was present. The higher result for the Shire is consistent with the DEECDs findings that the proportion of family violence incidents in which children and young people are present are considerably higher in regional areas compared to metropolitan locations (DEECD, 2012).

**Data:** Rate of reported family violence incidents per 100,000 population

**Source:** Police Crime Statistics, 2012/13

**INDICATOR:** Decrease in the proportion of children exposed to family violence

**Rate of substantiated child abuse per 1,000 children**

The rate of substantiated child abuse reports per 1,000 was higher for the Shire in 2010/11 compared to the state average; where substantiated reports referred to a notification of being substantiated if “there is reasonable cause to deem that a child has been, is being or likely to be abused or otherwise harmed” (DEECD, 2012, p64)

**Data:** Child abuse substantiations per 1,000 children aged 0-17 years.

**Source:** Client Relationship Information Systems (CRIS), 2010/11

**INDICATOR:** Increase the number of children living in a safe and secure environment

**Rate of children on child protection orders per 1,000 children**

Despite the higher number of substantiated child abuse reports for the Shire relative to the state as a whole, the number of children on a child protection order per 1,000 children in 2010 was lower than the State average.

**Data:** Children on child protection orders per 1,000 children aged 0-17 years.

**Source:** Client Relationship Information Systems (CRIS), 2010/11

**INDICATOR:** Increase the number of children living in a safe and secure environment
15. Children and young people are not victims of crimes

**Police reports of young assault victims**

Assault can have long lasting and complex negative effects on the physical and psychological health of children and young people, and can increase risk of some victims becoming perpetrators. However, there is an absence of robust data available at the time of writing to support an understanding of the extent to which children and young people are victims of assault across the Shire.

**INDICATOR: Increase the number of children living in a safe and secure environment**

"I feel safe when my family is here"

Ella, age 7

16. Children and young people are securely housed

**Unreasonable to live at home**

It was anticipated that data on the number of youth receiving Independent Youth Allowance - a special Centrelink payment previously provided to support youth when a classification of ‘unreasonable to live at home’ was applied – could be used to demonstrate the number of youths across the Shire deemed to have needed to move out of home in order to obtain secure housing. However, due to changes in the Centrelink payment structure, data pertaining to such a program could not be identified at the time of writing. Efforts to identify future data sources will be of priority.

**INDICATOR: Increase the number of children living in a safe and secure environment**

"I feel safe when I have my dog with me"

Tahlia, age 8
17. Families are financially secure

*Children from families that are largely dependent on government for their income are more likely to go without essential items such as secure housing, access to medical and dental treatments, substantial meals once a day, school activities and outings and so on. Supporting families out of poverty and indeed the cycle of intergenerational poverty is critical.*

**Families on a Health Care Card**
- **VIC:** 9%
- **MPS:** 8%

**Children in low income families**
- **VIC:** 22%
- **MPS:** 21%

**Children in households where adults have jobs**
- **VIC:** 87%
- **MPS:** 89%

Data indicates that the proportion of families on a health care card across the Shire was slightly lower than the state as a whole in 2012, as was the number of children living in low incomes families. Children in households where adults have jobs was higher across the Shire than for Victoria overall. However whilst data was not available at the township level to allow aggregations at the ward level, it is well known that there is great variation in the socio-economic situation for families across different pockets of the Shire.

*Data: Proportion of Families on a Health Care Card, Proportion of children in low income families and proportion of children in households where adults have jobs*

*Source: Centrelink and ABS Estimated Resident Population Data, 2012*

**INDICATOR: Increase the number of families who are economically secure**

**Learning or earning at age 15 to 19**
- **VIC:** 84%
- **MPS:** 81%

**Youth receiving unemployment benefits**
- **VIC:** 5%
- **MPS:** 5%

Data indicates that the proportion of young people earning or learning at age 15 to 19 was slightly lower across the Shire than the State as whole in 2011, with the number of youth aged 15-24 receiving unemployment benefits being reflective of the state average for this time. As is the case with a family’s economic situation, there are also young people experiencing greater levels of financial hardship and employment struggles in different pockets of the Shire.

*Data: Proportion of young people learning or earning at age 15 to 19 years, and proportion of youth 15-24 years receiving unemployment benefits.*

*Source: ABS Census Data, 2011*

**INDICATOR: Increase the number of families (young people) who are economically secure**
18. Families feel connected to their community

“A strong community is one where people understand and work towards sustainability and is inclusive of their most disadvantaged groups. To do this people need to be involved, feel capable of working through issues and feel supported by their fellow citizens”. (Community Indicators Victoria website, 2011)

Families feeling part of their community

Based on data collected by the VicHealth Indictor Survey, three quarters of community members across the Shire were estimated to be satisfied with feeling part of their community; slightly higher percentage than for the State as a whole.

Data: Proportion of community members satisfied with feeling part of the community.
Source: VicHealth Indicator Survey 2011

INDICATOR: Increase the proportion of families who have someone to turn to for advice

My favourite thing about living on the Mornington Peninsula is playing with my friends.

Deklan, age 10
Next steps

From the onset, the intention was that this benchmark report would provide an opportunity for reflection as to how children aged 0 to 12 years across different pockets of the Mornington Peninsula Shire were faring on key health and wellbeing indicators relative to children across Victoria.

It is anticipated that this snapshot in time will guide pro-active strategic planning at the local level to support children and families in the future and provide a rich baseline against which such efforts can be measured. It will be used to advocate on behalf of the Peninsula’s Children and young people and will be an important tool in supporting applications for resources targeting improved outcomes for children and their families.

“...when I go to the beach in the morning with my dog, because it makes me feel fresh.”

Poppy, age 10


Australian Early Development Index (AEDI) (2013). AEDI Facts Sheet – *Understanding the AEDI Results*. Melbourne: AEDI.

Australian Research Alliance for Children and Youth (ARACY) (2013). *The Nest Action Agenda - Improving the wellbeing of Australia’s children and youth while growing our GDP by over 7%*. Canberra: ARACY.


Department of Planning and Community Development (DPCD) (2014) *Victoria in Future (population projections)*. Melbourne: DPCD.


<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Indicator and data fact</th>
<th>Access</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>14: Children have had 3.5 year KAS visit</td>
<td>Maternal and Child Health Service Annual Report 2012-2013; see <a href="http://www.education.vic.gov.au/childhood/providers/support/pages/mchannualreportarchive.aspx">http://www.education.vic.gov.au/childhood/providers/support/pages/mchannualreportarchive.aspx</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17: Children have excellent or very good health</td>
<td>DEECDStudentEntrantHealthQuestionnaire2013; see <a href="http://www.education.vic.gov.au/Documents/about/research/sehq2013morningtonpeninsula.pdf">http://www.education.vic.gov.au/Documents/about/research/sehq2013morningtonpeninsula.pdf</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18: Children eat healthily</td>
<td>Data gap</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19: Children get recommended amount of exercise</td>
<td>Data gap</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20: Children well developed by first year of school</td>
<td>Australian Early Childhood Development Index 2012 (now AEDC); <a href="http://www.aedc.gov.au/resources/community-profiles">http://www.aedc.gov.au/resources/community-profiles</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21: Children ‘on-track’ for physical health and wellbeing</td>
<td>Australian Early Childhood Development Index 2012 (now AEDC); <a href="http://www.aedc.gov.au/resources/community-profiles">http://www.aedc.gov.au/resources/community-profiles</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22: Children ‘on-track’ for social competence and wellbeing</td>
<td>Australian Early Childhood Development Index 2012 (now AEDC); <a href="http://www.aedc.gov.au/resources/community-profiles">http://www.aedc.gov.au/resources/community-profiles</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23: Children ‘on-track’ for emotional maturity</td>
<td>Australian Early Childhood Development Index 2012 (now AEDC); <a href="http://www.aedc.gov.au/resources/community-profiles">http://www.aedc.gov.au/resources/community-profiles</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24: Good life / work balance</td>
<td>Community Indicators Victoria, Mornington Peninsula Wellbeing Report 2011; see <a href="http://www.communityindicators.net.au/wellbeing_reports/mornington_peninsula">http://www.communityindicators.net.au/wellbeing_reports/mornington_peninsula</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26: Children and young people have good mental health</td>
<td>Data gap</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>27: Children in household where a parent / family member experiences a mental illness</td>
<td>Data gap</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>28: Children and young people supported by positive relationships</td>
<td>Data gap</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>29: Children with additional needs by the area of support</td>
<td>MPS Maternal and Child Health Team; 2012/13 internal data provided on request</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30: Children and parents attending playgroups across the Shire</td>
<td>MPS Maternal and Child Health Team; 2012/13 internal data provided on request</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number</td>
<td>Indicator</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--------</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>31:</td>
<td>Children involved in activities outside of school</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>32:</td>
<td>Children ‘on-track’ for language and cognitive skills</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>33:</td>
<td>Children ‘on-track’ for communication and general knowledge</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>34:</td>
<td>Parents reading to children at home everyday</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>35:</td>
<td>Parents participating in schools</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>36:</td>
<td>Parents participating in early learning services</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>38:</td>
<td>Early learning and care attendance at age 3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>39:</td>
<td>Long day care or integrated children’s service attendance at age 4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>41:</td>
<td>Attendance rate at secondary school</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>46-49:</td>
<td>Students achieving min. national standards NUMERACY NAPLAN</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>50:</td>
<td>Young people successfully completing Year 12 or equivalent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>51:</td>
<td>Children and young people have access to and use technology at home</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>53:</td>
<td>Rate of substantiated child abuse per 1,000 children</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>54:</td>
<td>Rate of children on child protection orders per 1,000 children</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>55:</td>
<td>Police reports of young assault victims</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>56:</td>
<td>Unreasonable to live at home</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>58:</td>
<td>Children in low income families</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>59:</td>
<td>Children in households where adults have jobs</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
# Early Years Outcomes Framework for Victoria: 0 – 8 Years

To promote understanding of, and a focus on, children’s development, and to support services’ own planning, improvement and accountability.

## Four Inter-related Domains

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CHILD</th>
<th>BUILDING WELLBEING</th>
<th>LEARNING AND DEVELOPING</th>
<th>STAYING SAFE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Being Healthy</strong></td>
<td>All Victorian children are born and remain healthy, develop positive health behaviours and achieve optimal health</td>
<td>All Victorian children develop socially and emotionally, are resilient and have a strong sense of identity and wellbeing</td>
<td>All Victorian children experience and grow up in safe environments and communities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Outcomes</strong></td>
<td>• Children are born healthy</td>
<td>• Children are confident and involved learners</td>
<td>• Children’s environments are nurturing, safe and secure</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Children receive the nutrition, care, play and rest they need for healthy growth and development</td>
<td>• Children develop foundation skills for life and learning</td>
<td>• Children are protected from abuse, neglect, harm and exploitation</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Children begin to understand their own health and physical development</td>
<td>• Children engage with and benefit from quality educational opportunities and achieve positive outcomes</td>
<td>• Children are raised in economically secure environments</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Indicators</strong></td>
<td>• Increase in the proportion of infants who are breastfed</td>
<td>• Increase in the proportion of children on track for speech and language</td>
<td>• Increase in the number of children living in a safe and secure environment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Decrease in the proportion of low birth weight babies</td>
<td>• Increase in the proportion of children on track for learning and cognitive development</td>
<td>• Increase in the proportion of children attending safe and secure services</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Increase in the proportion of children who are fully immunised</td>
<td>• Increase in proportion of children who are read to by a family member every day</td>
<td>• Decrease in proportion of children exposed to family violence incidents</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Increase in the proportion of children who eat healthily and get the recommended amount of exercise</td>
<td>• Increase in the proportion of students achieving national minimum standards in NAPLAN</td>
<td>• Increase in the number of families who are economically secure</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Decrease in the proportion of children who are overweight and obese</td>
<td>• Increase in proportion of children participating in quality Early Childhood Education and Care services</td>
<td>• Increase in the proportion of parents who have someone to turn to for advice when having problems</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Increase in the proportion of children attending Maternal and Child Health Key Ages and Stages visits</td>
<td>• Increase in average rates of student attendance at primary school</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Families and communities are strong in their support for each other and create safe environments in which children grow, learn and live well.

Optimal outcomes for children are achieved through a quality, effective services approach that is responsive, seamless, cohesive and collaborative.