

STILL WAITING

Finding childcare in Melbourne



All families should have access to flexible, high quality, affordable childcare that is available when they need it.

But for too many families in Melbourne, accessing childcare is a challenge.

“Still waiting: Finding childcare in Melbourne” is a unique snapshot of the pressures facing childcare providers and local families in the Federal electorate of Melbourne. The report is the fifth prepared since 2010 and presents the latest study of childcare availability in the electorate conducted by the office of Adam Bandt MP.

The results are concerning. Centres reported long waiting lists and lack of vacancies. Families with children enrolled in care face long waits to change or increase days. Community and not-for-profit centres are particularly under strain to meet demand.

This report demonstrates that childcare availability and waiting times are not improving in the way they need to if we are to meet the needs of Melbourne families.

Key findings:

- ▲ Only 20% of centres had vacancies every day for 0-2 year-old children and 17% of centres had vacancies every day for 3-4 y.o. children
- ▲ Over half of centres in Melbourne had no vacancies at all for 0-2 year-old children
- ▲ Waiting lists for 0-2 year olds average 7.9 months
- ▲ Waiting lists for 3-4 year olds average 5.8 months
- ▲ Long day care in Melbourne costs an average of \$128 per day

“Still Waiting” demonstrates the need for urgent action to address the need for childcare in Melbourne. The Greens have a plan to expand childcare centres, support childcare workers, and ensure that quality and affordable childcare is available in Melbourne and around the country.



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Parents returning to work after paid parental leave need quality, flexible and affordable childcare to balance the demands of work and caring for children. But parents in Melbourne are under pressure. With only one in five childcare centres offering vacancies every day, urgent action is needed to fix the system.

— Adam Bandt —

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Vacancies and waiting lists for 0-2 year olds

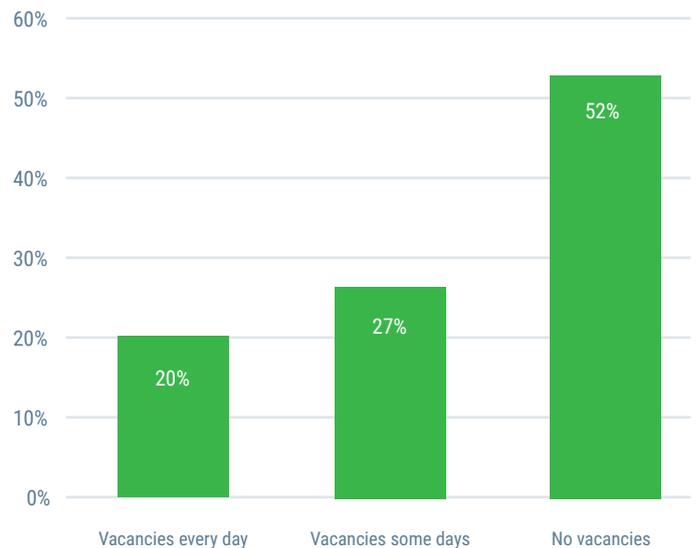
Barriers to childcare accessibility are particularly serious for 0-2 year-old children.

Only 20% of responding centres reported having places available every day. 52% of centres reported no vacancies at all.

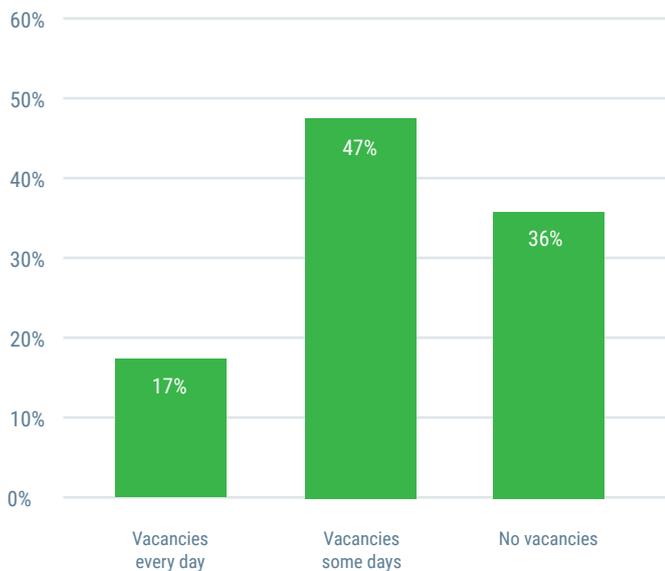
The average time spent on waiting lists for 0-2 year-old children was 7.9 months. For enrolled families wanting to change or increase days, the average waiting time was 3 months.

On average, each centre had 49 families waiting for a place for their 0-2 year-old child.

Vacancies for 0-2 year-olds in Melbourne



Vacancies for 3-4 year-olds in Melbourne



Vacancies and waiting lists for 3-4 year olds

While waiting times were on average slightly lower for the 3-4 year-old age group, it is clear that centres are still under serious pressure to meet demand.

Only 17% of responding centres reported having places available every day. Another 36% of centres had no vacancies on any day.

The average time spent on waiting lists for 3-4 year-old children was 5.8 months. For enrolled families wanting to change or increase days, the average waiting time was 2.6 months.

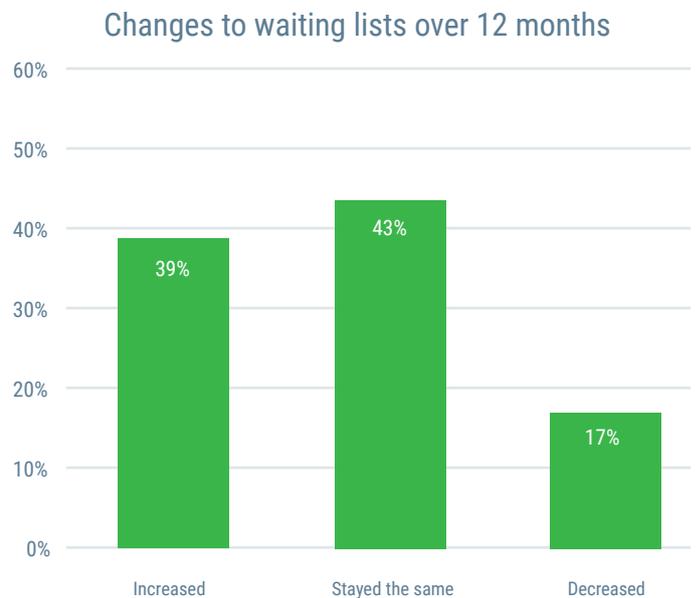
On average, each centre had 21 families waiting for a place for their 3-4 year-old child.



Changes to waiting lists over 12 months

Each centre was asked whether waiting lists in the last 12 months had increased, decreased or stayed the same.

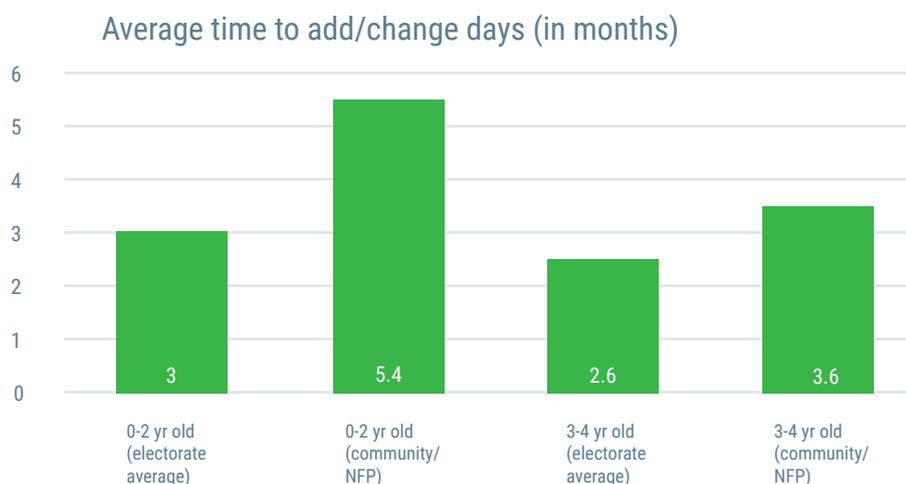
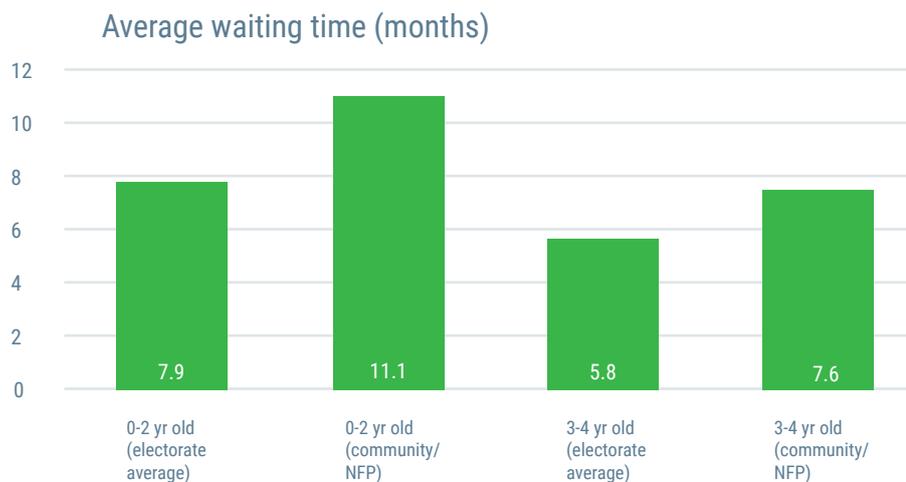
39% of centres stated that waiting times had increased; 43% stated that they had stayed the same; and just 17% stated that waiting times had decreased. In total, over 4 out of 5 centres felt that waiting times had increased or stayed the same over this period.



Pressures on community childcare

The results of the survey show that community and not-for-profit childcare centres are under particular pressure to meet demand from local families.

Waiting lists were significantly longer for community childcare centres than for the electorate average.



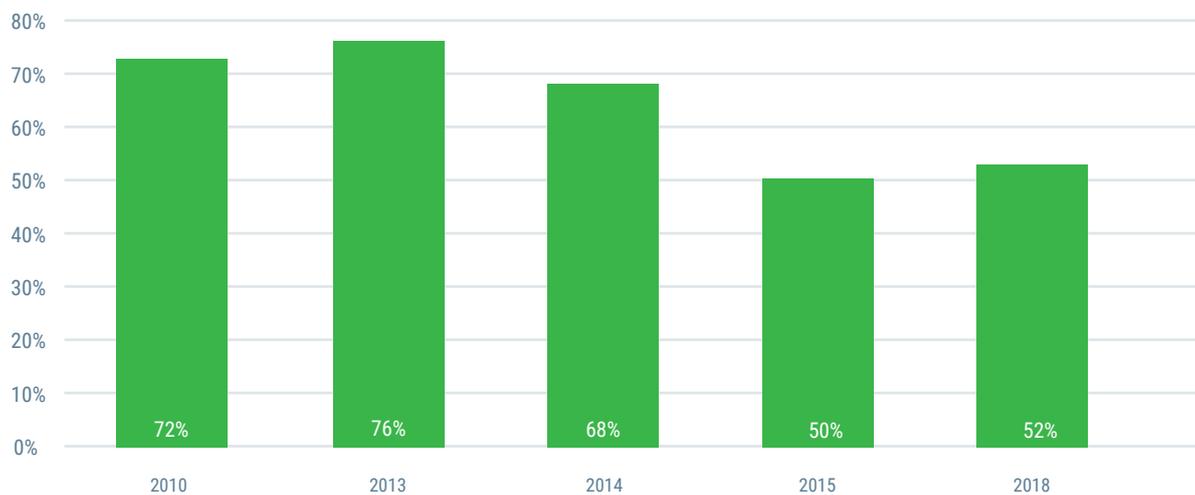
Comparison with previous survey results

This is the fifth survey of childcare centres in the electorate of Melbourne that has been conducted by the office of Adam Bandt MP since 2010. The results of these surveys allows us to present a picture of the changes in childcare availability in Melbourne over time.

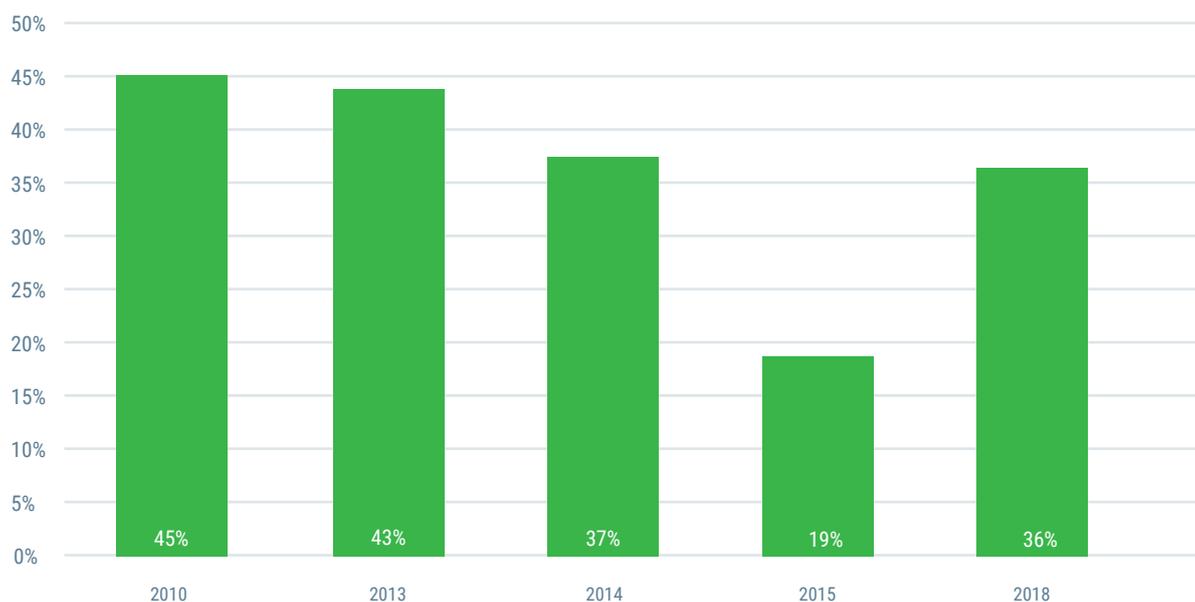
The survey results showed a reduction in average waiting list times for 0-2 year-old children: from 10.1 months in 2015 to 7.9 months in 2018. However, this positive result was not matched for the 3-4 age group, for which waiting times increased from 5.2 months in 2015 to 5.8 months in 2018.

The picture for vacancies is troubling. The number of centres reporting no vacancies has remained stubbornly high. The number of centres with no vacancies for 0-2 year-old children has slightly increased, from 50% in 2015 to 52% in 2018. For 3-4 year-old children, the number of centres with no vacancies has significantly increased, from 19% in 2015 to 36% in 2018.

Centres with no vacancies for 0-2 yr olds



Centres with no vacancies for 3-4 yr olds



Other findings

- ▲ The average cost of long day care across Melbourne was \$128 per day.
- ▲ In open-ended questions, a majority of centres stated that the major barrier to them offering more places was the physical space available at their premises.
- ▲ Multiple centres expressed the need for government action to ensure educators receive training, wages and support commensurate with their skills. Long day care in Melbourne costs an average of \$128 per day

About the survey

“Still Waiting” is the fifth survey of childcare centres in Melbourne conducted by the office of Adam Bandt. The survey was first conducted in 2010. The survey of childcare centres was conducted by phone over three days from 12/12/18 to 14/12/18. All centres offering long day care in the Federal electorate of Melbourne were contacted.

From 72 centres identified in the Melbourne electorate that offer long day care, 47 centres responded to the survey (65%). Of the centres that participated in the survey:

- ▲ 24 were community/NFP (51%)
- ▲ 5 were managed by local government (11%)
- ▲ 12 were private (26%)
- ▲ 6 were employer-based (13%)



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