



To whom it may concern:

We welcome the development of a new childcare centre to cater to the current community needs. Currently, the lack of childcare available to local families is a serious community concern, which impacts, families who are desperate for care to continue their usual work expectations, as well as employers desperately trying to recruit employees, however, are unable to do due to the lack of reliable childcare currently available in Karratha.

As the owner of Karratha Early Learning, an award-winning centre, our current waitlist are as follows:

**The current waitlist is over 300 families.**

Break this down to families who are waitlisted casually which is about 98 families (not all of these families will have completed enrolment forms and paid their bond to proceed but may do so at any time in the future). This is a combination of families who are happy to explore casual care only; however, many families attend casually while they wait for a permanent position.

We have 41 families actively using casual care (only casually enrolled) who have paid a bond.

We have 157 families on the waitlist looking for care for a future date and 71 families whose original preferred start dates have now passed however are still waitlisted for a position.

- One of the challenges the community is facing is an increase in families who would typically use the services of a Nanny or Au Pair are now needing to use Long Day Care as the border closures and visiting visa holders can no longer gain easy access into WA.
- Another challenge is the increase of families now relocating to Karratha instead of the FIFO lifestyle for job security, and family life balance with borders closing to the eastern states. This rapid increase in new families arriving has allowed The City of Karratha to plan for new infrastructure.
- There are no plans for any new childcare service to open in the near future as there was in previous years.
- Families are prepared to pay for positions in advance before needing them, continue to pay for positions for 6-8 weeks over Christmas holidays to ensure they retain their positions for fear of losing their positions.
- We have families who are transitioning to school pay for a full-time position for 50 hours to ensure the After School Care is available (after school care is only 15 hours per week) as positions are minimal.
- WA is operating relatively "Normal" as they have not been impacted by Covid like the other Australian States, so families are still going to work and are required to be in the office. Hence, working from home and having their children at home is less likely.
- Many families are in WA without the support of family or friends and rely on Long Day Care to be able to work along with the social and emotional benefits for their children.

We have 148 active families of these 41 attending casually. There are 202 children enrolled at the centre including BSC, ASC, Vacation Care and LDC.

The current waitlist for families new to the waitlist would experience a minimum 6-9 month wait before a position may become available. While we have families leave the centre usually due to relocation or going to school during the year we do not have very high turn over of families and our families if not leaving the area usually stay with us up to school.

We have implemented many options at the centre to meet the needs of these families, including:

- Introducing a casual booking App – where families who mark their child absent will enable another family to book their spot
- Incentives to encourage our families to mark their child absent as early as possible, allowing for other families to manage their childcare and work commitments.
- We have a list of families at the centre who haven't been able to book in for care either with a permanent booking or waiting for a child to be marked absent. These families are called on the day of care working through our list in order of request, once we have completed a full roll check.
- We offer a flexible booking system for short daycare, to cater to working families who might only require a few hours care, to enable us to provide extended daycare to those that genuinely need it.
- This year all our families who have secured a short day position wait for us to mark the rolls, to extend their child care, to enable them to work a full shift.
- We have introduced a reduced fee for families who take holidays, if they provide three weeks notice, enabling us to offer their position to another family.
- On top of this, we have some families who can only get a position for one child who waits at the centre with their other child, waiting to hear if we have a child away, before being able to attend work.
- Other families line up waiting for an announcement that we have a child away.
- We have been in contact with the Shire numerous times to hire more space at the Pam Buchanan centre. However, there is currently no allowable space to enable us to cater to the current community needs.

Currently, Karratha has the following number of children and long day care places available to service the community needs:

**The suburb of Millar's Well within the proposed daycare application**

**243 children between 0-5 years of age**, one existing centre with 105 LDC places

However, they are full of the long waitlist. Due to recruitment issues – historically, they only offer the community a portion of their licensed places:

2x nursery	8 babies
2 x toddlers	10 toddlers
2 x over three	20 children
<b>Total</b>	<b>38 children for this centre</b>

**The suburb of Nickol (immediately to the West of the proposed daycare application )**

**589 children** and one existing Long Day Care centres – 120 places

However, they are full of the long waitlist. Due to recruitment issues – historically, they only offer the community a portion of their licensed places:

2x nursery	8 babies
2 x toddlers	10 toddlers
2 x over three	20 children
<b>Total</b>	<b>38 children for this centre</b>

**Baynton (to the South West of the proposed daycare application)**

**686 children** and one existing LDC with 69 places

We are full every day – and cater to families who have children away to assist more families with their childcare needs. We don't have an issue recruiting high-quality educators and have won the following awards:

2019 Best Customer service award	Red Fm
2019 Business Excellence award	KCDCI
2018 Best Childcare centre	Red F

We work with the community needs some days we have ;

3 or 4 educators in Nursury	12 to 16 babies
4 or 5 or 6 educators in Toddlers	20 to 30 toddlers
4 or 5 educators in over three's	40 – 50 over threes

**To a maximum of 69 children per day**

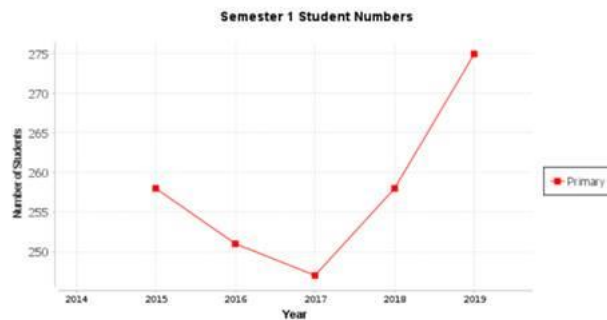
The area that the centre would service is the above three suburbs, which contain 1,518 children between 0-5 years of age and currently only 174 LDC places. This is a child to place ratio of 10.46

Anything over three is considered undersupplied, so a ratio of over ten is extremely undersupplied and shows that there are not enough places currently in the area

Millar's Well Primary school is increasing numbers every year. This may also be of assistance.

## Student Numbers - Trends

Select a semester



Semester 1	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
Primary (Excluding Kin)	258	251	247	258	275

Our current enrolled families and waitlist families as of today's date from Millar's Well, Nickol and Baynton are 167 families who would easily feed into the new Millar's well service to free up more space at Karratha Early Learning for local families within the estate who also service Baynton West School which currently has over 800 enrolled children who live in the immediate catchment.

The concerns for increase traffic for local residence; currently 50% of our 15 educators for a 69 place centre – walk to the service, as they are local. Due to Karratha Early Learning being located within a residential area, many of our families also walk to and from the centre. Our families find having a centre close to home is more of a convenience than an inconvenience. Children have friends within their immediate area, and it allows them to walk to and from.

The current application for a new childcare centre in Millars Well is desperately needed. The City of Karratha needs to consider the impact of the current childcare system has on all stakeholders; families, employers, private industry, local and state government. The centre will also provide job opportunity for local educators.

Having seen the detrimental impact the lack of childcare has had on the Town of Port Hedland, it would be an injustice to all, to not approve this application.

Warm regards

Michelle Pisani

Owner and Approved Provider

Early Learning Australia