

STILL NO VACANCY



FINDING A CHILDCARE PLACE IN FEDERAL MELBOURNE

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Finding a childcare place in Federal Melbourne

If we're serious about helping women return to work, we need to provide enough quality childcare places. This report shows the pressures many young families are under. There is an urgent need to offer more childcare places in Melbourne and to help existing centres expand.

Adam Bandt, Federal Member for Melbourne



All families should have access to flexible, high quality, affordable childcare that is available when they need it in order to balance the demands of work, study and caring for young children.

A new study by Federal member for Melbourne, Adam Bandt, shows that parents in Melbourne are not always able to access care for their children when they need it.

Most families have a hard time even accessing a place, especially if their child is under 2, and when they are offered a place it may not be on the days they need or at their most convenient centre. To add to the difficulties faced by Melbourne parents, a recent report found that federal Melbourne had the third most expensive childcare in all of Victoria.



Adam's study shows that:

- *76% of centres had no vacancies for the 0–2 age group, and 43% had no vacancies for 3–4 year olds.*
- *Of centres that did have vacancies, they were often inflexible, for example only on particular days.*
- *Parents usually spend between 6–24 months waiting for a place for their children.*
- *Some centres have over 300 families waiting for a place.*
- *The level of unmet demand for quality childcare in Melbourne is unacceptable.*

Too many families in Melbourne are missing out on high quality, affordable childcare that is available when they need it. Childcare that works for families is essential for parents who are busy balancing their work/study life and their home life.

This study shows the situation has not improved since the first landmark study 'No Vacancy – Finding a childcare place in Federal Melbourne' was conducted by Adam Bandt and the Greens in 2010.

There is an urgent need to offer more childcare places in Melbourne and to help existing centres expand.

BACKGROUND

In 2010, the Greens published a landmark report on the lack of vacancies in childcare centres in the Federal Melbourne electorate.

This year, Adam's office contacted long day care centres to inquire about their most recent vacancy rates and the length of their waiting lists

Disappointingly, the number of long day care centres with vacancies has fallen while waiting lists have remained stubbornly long.

VACANCIES AND WAITLISTS FOR 0-2 YEAR OLDS

Vacancies for parents with babies and children under 2 are alarmingly low. Across the 37 centres, Adam found that:

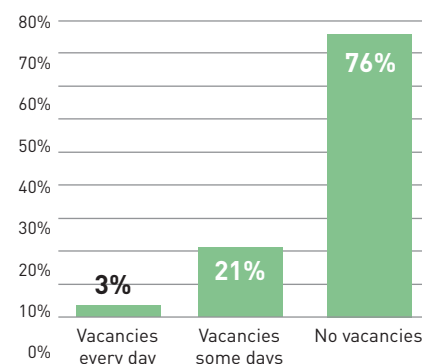
- 76% had no vacancies for this age group. This is up from 72% in 2010.
- Only one centre had vacancies every day for this age group.
- Of the centres that reported vacancies, most had only one or two days that were available and these days were inflexible.

Additionally, Adam found that waitlists are unacceptably long. Centres record and reported waitlists in one of two ways: by giving the number of families currently on the list (41%); or the average number of months spent by families waiting for a place (59%) (see Appendix A for further details on waiting lists).

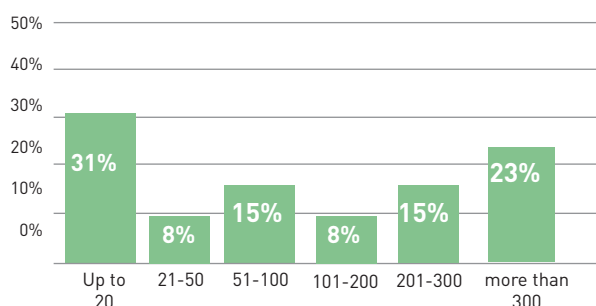
Of the centres that reported on the number of families waiting, 46% had over 100 families waiting for a place.

Of the centres that reported the average length of time on the waitlist, 47% of families spend up to a year on the waitlist and a whopping 53% of families spend 12-24 months waiting for a place.

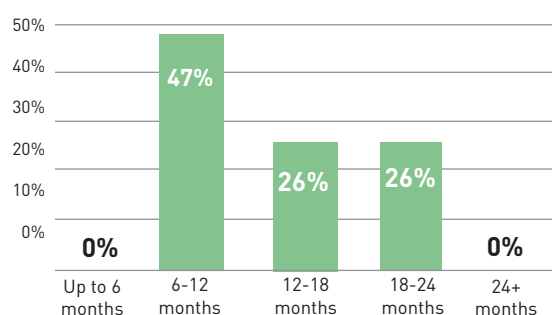
Vacancies for 0-2 year olds in Melbourne



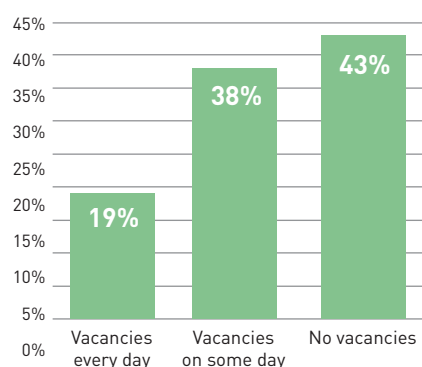
Number of Families on waiting lists for 0-2 year olds



Average length of time spent on waitlist for 0-2 year olds



Vacancies for 3-4 year olds in Melbourne



VACANCIES AND WAITLISTS FOR 3-4 YEAR OLDS

Families with older children fare slightly better. Across centres, Adam found that:

- 43% of centres had no vacancies.
- Of the 57% that reported vacancies, there is fair coverage across days and some full time availability.
 - 50% of centres had vacancies for two or more days
 - 19% of centres had full time vacancies

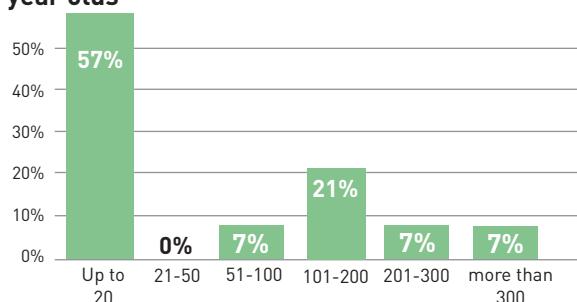
While 24% of centres reported that they did not have a waitlist for children aged 3-4, some centres reported even longer waitlist times for children in this age group than for 0-2 year olds.

As with the 0-2, of the centres that reported having a waitlist, some gave the number of families on the waitlist and others gave the average number of months spent waiting.

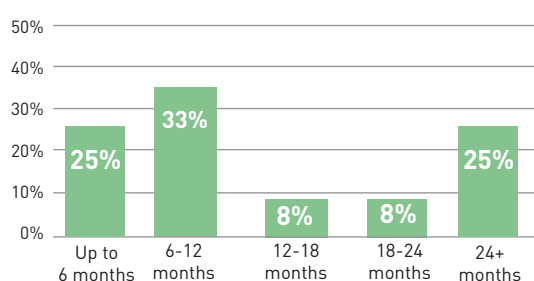
Of the centres that reported on the number of families waiting, 36% had over 100 families waiting for a place.

Of the centres that reported the average length of time spent waiting, 75% said families spend at least 6 months on the waitlist. A third of those reported that families wait at least 18 months for a place.

Number of Families on waiting lists for 3-4 year olds



Average length of time spent on waitlist for 3-4 year olds



COMPARISON WITH 2010	2010	2013
Vacancies for 0-2 year olds every day	6%	3%
Vacancies for 0-2 year olds on some days	22%	21%
No vacancies for 0-2 year olds	72%	76%
Vacancies for 3 year olds every day	11%	19%
Some vacancies Reported	44%	38%
No vacancies for 3 year olds	45%	43%

Appendix A – Wait lists

0-2 year olds

Number of families (13 centres reported data this way)	
Up to 20	4
21-50	1
51-100	2
101-200	1
201-300	2
more than 300	3
Average length of time spent on waitlist (19 centres reported this way)	
Up to 6 months	0
6-12 months	9
12-18 months	5
18-24 months	5
24+ months	0
No waitlist	1
Yes, but not sure how long	4

3-4 year olds

Number of families (14 centres reported data this way)	
Up to 20	8
21-50	0
51-100	1
101-200	3
201-300	1
more than 300	1
Average length of time spent on waitlist (12 centres reported this way)	
Up to 6 months	3
6-12 months	4
12-18 months	1
18-24 months	1
24+ months	3
No waitlist	9
Yes, but not sure how long	2

About the data

According to the Australian Government's 'MyChild' website (mychild.gov.au) there are 62 centres in the Melbourne electorate. 56 of these centres are open to all residents, but a further 6 centres are primarily available for staff and/or students of an institution (eg hospitals, universities, training colleges). Because of their restrictive admissions policies, these 6 centres have not been included in this study. The 37 responses received to this survey from 56 centres represents a 66% response rate, giving a high degree of reliability to the survey's findings. The survey was conducted during May 2013.

Figures in graphs may not add up to 100% due to rounding

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**THE
GREENS.**