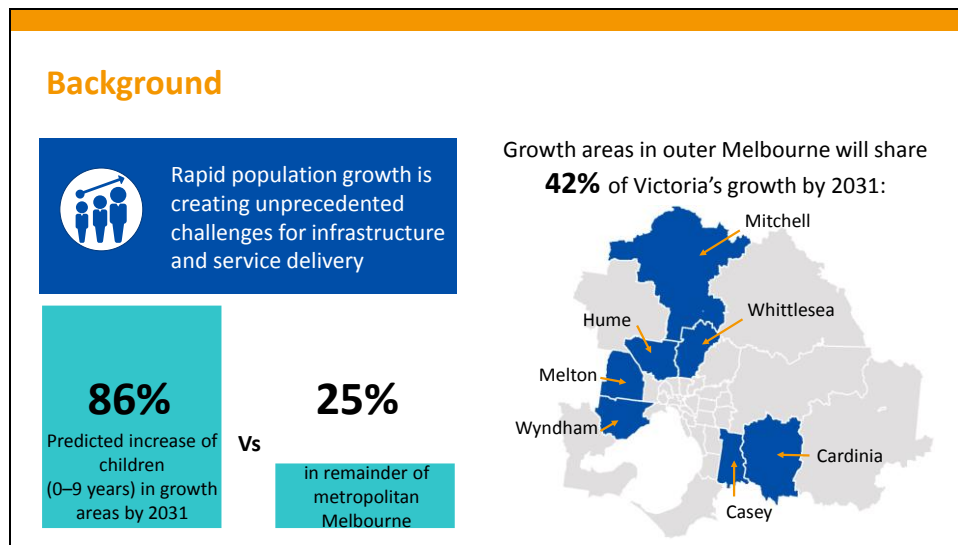


Slide 1



This presentation provides an overview of the Victorian Auditor-General's report *Effectively Planning for Population Growth*.



Victoria's population has grown rapidly in recent years since 2011, creating unprecedented challenges for infrastructure and service delivery, especially in the growth areas, where these are limited and generally lag behind population settlement.

The seven growth areas in outer areas of Melbourne (shown in blue on the map) will share 42 per cent of the state's growth by 2031, and will have significantly higher growth in children aged 0–9 years old.

Birthing, maternal and child health (MCH), and funded kindergarten services are important for the health and wellbeing of babies and young children. The timely provision of these services is vital to these communities.

What we looked at and how



Does state planning meet the needs of the rapidly growing population for **birthing, maternal and child health (MCH), and funded kindergarten services** and related infrastructure, in **growth areas and established suburbs**?



- Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning (DEWLP)
- Victorian Planning Authority (VPA)
- Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS)
- Department of Education and Training (DET)
- Hume City Council, Mitchell Shire Council and Moreland City Council
- Northern Health, and the Kilmore & District Hospital

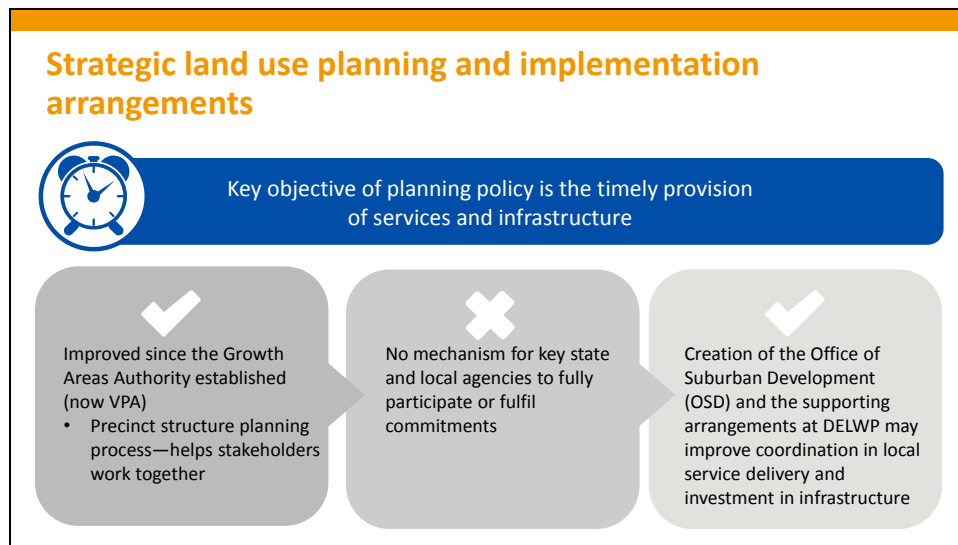
In this audit, we assessed whether state planning is meeting the needs of the rapidly growing population for birthing, MCH, and funded kindergarten services and related infrastructure, in both greenfield growth areas and established suburbs.

In particular, we assessed whether there are clear accountability mechanisms to assure the Parliament and the community that relevant government policies are being effectively implemented, helping to achieve their intended outcomes.

We looked at several agencies that share responsibility and accountability for the planning and provision of these services:

- the Department of Environment, Land, Water, and Planning (DELWP)
- the Victorian Planning Authority (VPA)
- the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS), and
- the Department of Education and Training (DET).

We also looked at three local government areas, as well as Northern Health, and the Kilmore & District Hospital as case studies.

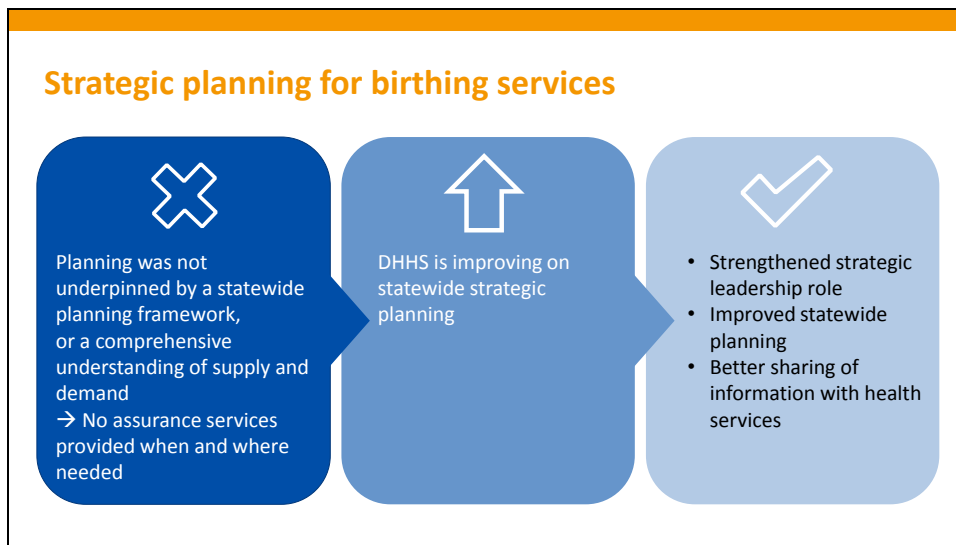


A key objective of Victoria’s planning policy is the timely provision of services and infrastructure to communities through orderly development.

Strategic land use planning in greenfield growth areas has improved since the Growth Areas Authority (now the VPA) was established in 2006 as the responsible agency. This is mainly through the precinct structure planning process, which allows key stakeholders responsible for providing services and related infrastructure to work together.

However, the intended benefits of integrated land use plans are not being fully realised because no mechanism requires government agencies to fully participate in the land use planning process, or to fulfil commitments made through these plans.


The creation of the Office of Suburban Development in 2016, and the supporting collaborative arrangements at DELWP, may present an opportunity to improve coordination in local service delivery and investment in infrastructure.




Until recently, DHHS’s birthing service planning activities were not underpinned by a statewide planning framework, or a comprehensive understanding of the system-wide demand for, and supply of, birthing services. This gives no assurance that birthing services are provided when and where needed.

Through DHHS’s recent initiatives to strengthen its strategic leadership role and improve statewide planning, including better sharing of planning information with individual health services, DHHS is now addressing this accountability gap.

Strategic planning for MCH and funded kindergarten services

 Councils plan and deliver MCH services in their area

➔ However, there is no statewide perspective on whether government objectives are being met, particularly in areas of rapid population growth

 DET's planning approach did not oversee whether kindergarten services are provided when and where needed




➔ Recently addressed through the *Early Childhood Reform Plan* and the *Early Years Compact*

Councils plan for and deliver MCH services in their local area. However, there is no statewide perspective on whether government objectives are being met, particularly in areas of rapid population growth.

Until recently DET's planning approach did not oversee whether kindergarten services are provided when and where they are needed.

DET has recently begun to address this oversight. Through the *Early Childhood Reform Plan* and the *Early Years Compact*, it will focus on more integrated and strategic planning of services, including taking more leadership for kindergarten infrastructure planning.

Strategic planning for MCH and funded kindergarten services

-  DET now working to understand and increase participation rates by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and culturally and linguistically diverse families
-  Development of the Child Development Information System (CDIS) for MCH services is a positive step
 - Similar need for a council-based centralised kindergarten enrolment system
-  Overall, DET needs to improve system-wide information on participation and the reasons for under-participation

DET has also recently undertaken work to understand and increase participation rates by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and culturally and linguistically diverse families.

The development of the Child Development Information System (CDIS) for MCH services is a positive step to supporting child-centred service planning and provision across councils.

There is a similar need for a council-based centralised kindergarten enrolment system.

Overall, DET needs to improve system-wide information on participation and the reasons for under-participation in MCH and funded kindergarten services.

Recommendations

6 recommendations for DELWP

- Work with agencies to participate fully in land use planning
- Strengthen the integration, monitoring and review of precinct structure plans
- Clarify the governance of the Office of Suburban Development and assessing its effectiveness

1 recommendation for Victorian Planning Authority

- Prepare a sequencing strategy for precinct structure plans in growth areas covering land release and delivery of community facilities

We made six recommendations for DELWP focusing on:

- working with agencies to participate fully in land use planning
- strengthening the integration, monitoring and review of precinct structure plans
- clarifying the governance of the Office of Suburban Development and assessing its effectiveness.

We made one recommendation for VPA to prepare a sequencing strategy for precinct structure plans in growth areas covering land release and delivery of community facilities.

Recommendations

1 recommendation for DHHS

- Apply lessons learned from the Northern Growth Corridor Plan in developing locality health plans

3 recommendations for DET

- Strengthen its oversight role for statewide delivery of kindergarten services, and improve participation data and its analysis of under-participation

We made one recommendation for DHHS to apply lessons learned from the Northern Growth Corridor Plan in developing locality health plans.

We made three recommendations for DET focusing on strengthening its oversight role for statewide delivery of kindergarten services, and improving participation data and its analysis of under-participation.

**For further information, please view the full report on our website:
www.audit.vic.gov.au**

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