

Key findings – Australia

- ◆ World-first study of international childcare access finds where you live affects your access to childcare.
- ◆ 700,000 Australians live with no access to childcare and almost 24% of Australians live in childcare 'deserts' where there are more than three children vying for every childcare spot. This is slightly better than 2020, when the figure was 34%.

Year	Median places per child	Average places per child	Percent living in a 'desert'
2020	0.417	0.425	36%
2024	0.47	0.475	24%

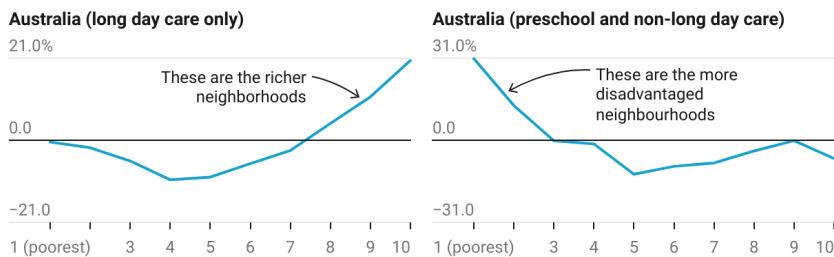
- ◆ Around 80,000 more places have been created since 2020, but the distribution remains uneven. Metropolitan and major regional areas have seen the highest growth, while remote areas have grown the least. It has even gone backwards for very remote Australia.
- ◆ The report confirms the need for new approaches to meet the aim of universal access to childcare in Australia.

Regional area	Population (non-school aged children)	2024 results (Places per child)	2020 results (Places per child)	Change in places per child between 2020 and 2024	Per cent change
Inner Regional Australia	276,000	0.428	0.375	0.053	14.1%
Major Cities of Australia	1,210,000	0.488	0.431	0.057	13.2%
Outer Regional Australia	126,000	0.398	0.351	0.047	13.2%
Remote Australia	22,000	0.321	0.299	0.023	7.6%
Very Remote Australia	15,000	0.330	0.299	0.032	10.5%

- ◆ Government policies and incentives matter. Where services are covered by the Child Care Subsidy (CCS), providers are more likely to operate in more affluent areas as they can increase their revenue opportunities through a share of the subsidy. But the story is different for preschools – which are run more like the schools sector, and are more likely to be publicly funded with few subsidies. At this level, accessibility is better for parents in disadvantaged areas.

In Australia, it is the parts of the childcare system that are most like schools that have better access in disadvantaged areas

Difference from mean childcare places per child by system (1 = most disadvantaged regions and 10 = most advantaged).



- ◆ [Get the data visualisation here](#)

The top 10 areas in Australia...the good and the bad

The biggest movers by area between 2020 and 2024 are below. *Note: A childcare ‘desert’ is where there are more than three children per childcare place or 0.333 place per child. Locations with less than 0.333 are considered a desert.*

Table 1: Biggest decrease in childcare places per child

Suburb	2024 results (Places per child)	2020 results (Places per child)
Mount Morgan, QLD	0.000	0.336
Ainslie, ACT	0.694	0.974
Virginia, NT	0.532	0.752
Grindelwald- Lanena, TAS	0.211	0.369
Humpty Doo, NT	0.305	0.460

Table 2: Biggest increase in childcare places per child

Suburb	2024 results (Places per child)	2020 results (Places per child)
Yarrawonga, VIC	0.865	0.418
Flagstone (East) – Riverbend, QLD	0.843	0.467
Sorell – Richmond, TAS	0.651	0.185
Kyneton, VIC	0.569	0.364
Agnes Water – Miriam Vale, QLD	0.647	0.293

The full international study: *International childcare report: Mapping the deserts* will be released from early September. Australian data can be found [here](#).