

# 40,000 miss childcare [AU] <sup>[1]</sup>

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AVAILABILITY  
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## EXCERPTS

More than 40,000 Victorian children are missing out on childcare - four times more than has been acknowledged previously.

New figures prepared by the Australian Bureau of Statistics show the state's childcare crisis is far worse than thought.

Previously, government officials and the federal Opposition have estimated the number of Victorian children needing places to be 10,000.

The bureau's figures have also revealed a similar discrepancy nationally, showing unmet demand for childcare places to be 174,500 -- more than three times the Opposition's previous estimate of 50,000.

The figures highlight the escalating pressure on mainly middle-income families to either afford childcare or find vacancies.

Acting Children and Youth Affairs Minister Amanda Vanstone said the Government used different methods to the ABS to measure unmet demand.

Whereas the ABS interviewed parents, the Government took advice from the Victorian Child Care Planning Advisory Committee -- which assesses the number of actual requests for places.

The Government had increased the number of before and after school hours childcare places in Victoria by 158 per cent since it came to power in 1996, the minister said.

Breaking down the ABS analysis, it showed 11,500 out-of-hours places and 3100 family day care places were required.

Senator Vanstone, however, put Victoria's unmet demand for out-of-hours places at 3003 and family day care at 100.

Ms Roxon called on the Government to start tackling the problem by removing the cap on Commonwealth-funded out-of-hours places.

The Government says it has spent record amounts on childcare, including \$5.3 billion over the past four years.

-Reprinted from The Herald Sun [AU]

**Region:** Australia and New Zealand <sup>[2]</sup>

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