



PORTFOLIO NAME: Early Childhood
Portfolio Report
DATE: March 2026

Motions presented at the 2025 State Conference for the Early Childhood Portfolio were limited in number; however, this did not slow State Council's commitment to recognising and advocating for the need for three-year-old programs across rural, regional and remote areas of Western Australia.

I attended the 2025 Federal Conference held in Adelaide, which was well attended by WA Branch members and representatives. During this conference, I had the opportunity to establish an in-person connection with Amy Graham from Minderoo Foundation. I look forward to strengthening this relationship to explore opportunities for collaboration that support the expansion of early childhood programs into the areas where they are most needed.

The Motherland WA Event

In September, ICPA WA was invited to attend Motherland's first Western Australian event, held at Darken Town Hall. The event welcomed over 100 mothers, many with babies in tow, and created a warm and supportive environment for connection and shared experiences.

I hope to continue building this positive working relationship with the Motherland team into 2026. ICPA Federal Council also attended Motherland's National Conference on 13–14 March, where each state was invited to provide materials for attendees. Participating in events such as these allows us to connect with potential members and strengthen collaborative networks that benefit rural and remote families.

Child Care Subsidy – 3 Day Guarantee

On 5 January, it was announced that all Child Care Subsidy (CCS) eligible families can now access a minimum of 72 hours of subsidised childcare per fortnight.

Families may be eligible for up to 100 hours of subsidised care per fortnight per child if they:

- Care for an Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander child
- Have more than 48 hours of recognised activity per fortnight
- Have an exemption or exceptional circumstances approved by Services Australia
- Receive Additional Child Care Subsidy (ACCS) for child wellbeing, temporary financial hardship, or grandparent care

Families are encouraged to visit the Services Australia website for further details on eligibility and application requirements.

Early Years Community Plan Update – Derby

A significant milestone has been reached in the development of the proposed Early Learning and Family Centre in Derby, with a \$261,832 grant awarded to the Ngunga Group Women’s Aboriginal Corporation to deliver the project’s first phase. This funding will support the development of a project definition plan to guide the establishment of the centre, which aims to provide culturally secure early learning opportunities for local children and families.

The grant forms part of the Early Years Partnership — a collaboration between the Western Australian Government, Minderoo Foundation, and The Kids Research Institute Australia — focused on improving developmental, health, and learning outcomes for children aged 0–4 in partner communities including Derby, Mowanjum, Pandanus Park, Armadale West, Central Great Southern, and Bidyadanga. The Partnership received a \$34.6 million funding boost in the 2024–25 State Budget to support continued investment in early childhood development.

The Derby centre is one of 24 priority projects funded through the Partnership and was identified through the community-led plan *Wirriya Dunyji Ooba Babanil Ingun – Happy Strong Small Children*, which highlighted the need for culturally safe early learning services. Overall, \$8.3 million has been committed by the State Government toward establishing the centre, alongside a \$2.2 million contribution from Minderoo Foundation.

This initiative represents a strong example of community-driven planning and cross-sector collaboration supporting positive early childhood outcomes in regional Western Australia.

ICPA WA remains committed to ensuring that early childhood opportunities are equitable, accessible, and responsive to the unique needs of rural and remote families.

COUNCILLOR NAME: Megan Dorrell

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