

## EARLY CHILDHOOD

### A 7. NEBO BRANCH

#### Motion

**“That ICPA Qld lobbies the Department of Education to ensure that all rural and remote schools are adequately resourced, from both staffing and infrastructure perspectives, to develop and deliver kindergarten programs in a multi-age setting.”**

#### Explanation:

Since the introduction of the state delivered kindergarten program, there have been many benefits to rural communities and families. There are, however, real challenges for the educators and support staff juggling the early learning requirements of the kindy cohort, which is largely play based, and the direct learning of the remaining students in P-6 with the curriculum and classroom-based learning. Many of these schools are one-teacher schools, with the principal or teacher being significantly stretched between these varying educational needs. The support staff are similarly stretched and find themselves under resourced and unable to fully meet the learning requirements of all, simultaneously. There are also practical issues when it comes to supervision.

The integration of kindergarten children into the schooling system is unique to rural and remote schools. Many rural schools have slotted the kindergarten students into their existing school environment, but still require upgrades to their facilities, for example, bathroom amenities by way of additional, and lower toilets suitable for the younger children, showers, washing machines, greater ground level or ramp accessibility, and more age-appropriate play resources in the classroom and playgrounds. Many schools have not sought these upgrades as it would be a hit to their budget, that they require elsewhere, and thus carry on with resources they have. We are urging the Department to consider greater funding to all areas of the kindergarten program, to improve schools on all fronts of teaching, learning, and infrastructure resources so that rural and remote schools are under less strain and better able to deliver the kindergarten program, whilst not compromising their obligation to the curriculum to the remainder of the school students.

#### CARRIED

### A 8. CLARKE CREEK BRANCH

#### Motion

**“That ICPA Qld lobbies relevant authorities for the allocation of a full-time early childhood teacher to small schools where the kindergarten enrolment exceeds 5 students in schools with total enrolments of greater than 18 and less than 25 students.”**

#### Explanation:

Kindergarten students are as young as 3.5 – 4 years old when they commence kindergarten. In primary schools offering the State Delivered Kindergarten program to families in rural and remote communities there are also children representative of cohorts from Prep to Year 6. Effectively that means that a small school with enrolments of up to 25 students may have children in attendance from 3.5 years to 11 years of age with a teaching principal, a part-time teacher (if they are fortunate enough to find one) and teacher aides (if they are able to source any) Kindergarten students require constant supervision and age-appropriate planning by teaching staff. In instances where a school has between 18 and 25 students with

more than 5 kindergarten students in attendance, there should be the appointment of an additional full-time Early Childhood teacher to cater for the additional demand of these younger children.

**CARRIED**

#### **A 9. NEBO BRANCH**

##### **Motion**

**“That ICPA Qld lobbies the Department of Education to ensure that all teachers in schools offering State Delivered Kindergarten are remunerated to reflect their additional requirements in implementing the kindergarten program.”**

##### Explanation:

Staff burn out is an increasing and recurring issue for rural and remote schools. Many implement the kindergarten program in a one-teacher setting, with limited support staff who are already stretched. This setting inherently leads to an increased workload, often completed outside of their hours, and receiving no additional remuneration, which in turn is seeing a decline in attraction of staff to rural and remote schools as the support is not there and their workloads are becoming more onerous.

The planning for the kindergarten program is required to be undertaken and overseen by a teacher yet can be implemented by teacher-aide staff. There is a lack of adequate remuneration for this additional time outlay by teachers, and an expectation on teacher-aide staff, whom are not specifically early childhood trained, to deliver it.

We are seeking that the Department recognise that in these multi-age settings, the planning and teaching across such a wide range is extensive and requires greater financial support.

**CARRIED**

#### **A 10. HUGHENDEN BRANCH**

##### **Motion**

**“That ICPA Qld lobbies relevant stakeholders and In Home Care (IHC) to establish a rural and remote IHC branch that solely works alongside families who are geographically isolated.”**

##### Explanation:

In Home Care currently provides funding for families whose circumstances make it difficult for them to access other forms of mainstream childcare. This funding enables families to employ a suitable educator to deliver childcare in the home. The funding is tailored to meet the needs and circumstances of each family. There are a number of In Home Care support agencies in Queensland. It would be beneficial to rural and remote families who use IHC to work with one Agency who solely support families and their needs living in geographical isolated areas.

**CARRIED**

#### **S 2. MITCHELL-TOMOO/DUNKELD BRANCH**

##### **Motion**

**“That ICPA Qld lobbies the Department of Education to standardise payment rates and methodology made to all rural and remote kindergarten service providers to ensure equity.”**

#### Explanation:

As it stands, there is an unfair distribution of payment rates between sessional kindies (Stand-alone) and long day care providers who deliver kindy. Sessional kindies are receiving more funding than day care centres in rural Queensland. We acknowledge that day care centres are receiving the CCS funding (Federal Government funding), but this is falling short of what sessional kindies are receiving. Sessional kindies receive their funding allocation at the start of the term, whereas long day care centres do not receive their funding allocation until the end of the term. This is making it hard for small not-for-profit long day care centres in rural Queensland to be financially viable as they cannot pass on this funding to parents/families until they receive it. If the centre passes on the funding early, it leaves them out of pocket for the remainder of the term, as well as the possibility of incorrect payments being made. This inequity makes it hard for small centres with small numbers of children in rural areas to stay in operation as well as parents/families being further out of pocket.

#### **CARRIED**

### **S 3. MITCHELL-TOMOO/DUNKELD BRANCH**

#### **Motion**

**“That ICPA Qld lobbies the Department of Education to review the funding model for Rural and Remote Long Day Care Centres providing Kindergarten programs to ensure they, and the students/families that utilise the service, are not disadvantaged by changes made to the program.”**

#### Explanation:

Last year, the Remote Area Funding (ARIA) went to the centre to distribute how it worked best for their centre. This year, the new funding model is allocated to individuals/families and the remoteness amount to the teacher (which is great, we need ECTs (Early Childhood Teachers) in our centres via the centre to distribute, but this model is not considering how these small centres with small numbers of children can distribute the funding. In 2022 QKFS (Qld Kindy Funding Scheme) had ARIA (Remote Area Funding) which was allocated to the centres in rural/remote Queensland. By not having extra funding for remoteness for the centres themselves to use to keep their business viable the long day care centres are put under financial pressure which means the increase in fees is passed on to parents/families. The roll out of this new funding has been and continues to be very hard for the provider to understand and allocate funds, let alone the parents/families who turn to these providers for answers and come away with very little understanding of this new funding model. In small rural/remote towns we have no choice as to where we send our children for this very beneficial and important year of education - Kindy. In small towns we only have the one option of kindy that is available to us.

#### **CASE-STUDY**

Changes to kindy funding from 2022 (QKFS – Qld Kindy Funding Scheme) to 2023 (Kindy Subsidies):

Kindy fees increase at Mitchell Long Day Care Centre:

Kindy fees have increased from \$65/day to \$97.80/day for a 5-day fortnight kindy program from 2022 to 2023 with the new kindy funding. This is a \$32.80 increase per day. The service has had to increase their fees to be able to run efficiently and sustainably. These increases will also increase overtime with the cost of living and wage increases etc. We need these facilities to stay viable for the future of our children and education in our little rural communities.

Last year the funding (QKFS) was applied to the fees before CCS (Childcare subsidy – federal funding) was applied, therefore parental out of pocket was less.

With the new funding, families receive the base subsidy which is \$70/fortnight off their out-of-pocket fees. Some families receive the Kindy plus subsidy (A&TI, Healthcare care, pension, living out of home etc) or FTB A or B (Family Tax Benefit Subsidy) if eligible, these extra subsidies make the out of pocket less for these individual families. This individual family's out of pocket fees are/were approximately:

2022 - \$32.50/day

2023- \$45/day

If the long day-care didn't provide a kindergarten program in the town the State Government would be funding a free State-run kindy at the local state school like the kindy program running half an hour down the road. It is not viable for these families to access this Kindy as it would be a 1 hour round trip twice a day and this would make it very difficult to have women in particular, in the work force and educate their kindy children.

Other similar towns are experiencing these same issues through their kindy program run at their long day care.

The sessional kindy in Charleville's out of pocket for this family would be approx. \$21/day this year.

**CARRIED**

#### **S 4. NEBO BRANCH**

##### **Motion**

**“That ICPA Qld lobbies the Department of Education to make available Queensland Distance Education kindergarten program planning materials, to staff in rural and remote schools offering the State Delivered Kindergarten Program.”**

##### Explanation:

By making these resources available to rural and remote schools, it will alleviate many current challenges, and the planning workload. These programs are often implemented in one teacher schools, with teaching principals generally having no prior experience planning for this cohort, as it is not a prerequisite for them taking up positions in Band 1 schools and find themselves feeling ill-equipped and an increased planning workload which is already overwhelming given their planning requirements for students in all other year levels. The support staff who assist in overseeing and implementing the program also have limited or no early childhood training. By having clearly defined materials to guide off, this would greatly assist all members of staff to best implement the program in a more efficient and informed way.

**CARRIED**