

EARLY CHILDHOOD

1. A14. DAWSON VALLEY BRANCH

“That ICPA Qld Inc. lobbies the Department of Education, Training and Employment and other relevant bodies to address the growing shortfall of Early Childhood teachers in remote and rural communities and qualification requirements associated with teaching in rural areas.”

Carried

Explanation: Qualification requirements to teach Kindy in a rural community need to have exemptions in place for qualified teachers. The struggle for a rural community to run a kindy program is getting harder and harder. To be able to find a qualified teacher to teach in a rural community is one thing. However, to then have the requirement that they cannot teach kindy until they have then completed another bridging course is almost impossible. The current situation means that a qualified primary or high school teacher cannot teach kindy unless they have completed a bridging course.

2. A15. CUNNAMULLA BRANCH

“That ICPA (QLD) Inc. lobbies the QLD Ministers for Education, Child Safety, Youth, Women and Communities to identify new long-term funding for all play-based Children’s Mobiles both new and existing operating in QLD.”

Word Change

Carried

Explanation: As you are aware the Federal Govt. Budget Based Funding for play-based children’s mobile services that are unable to transition to the new Federal Government (centre- based) Child Care Funding ends on 30 Jun 2018. No new funding has been identified for play based mobiles unable to transition, without new funding these services will close and be lost from rural remote communities forever, just like PCAP. The impact of isolation can affect a child’s development from an early age. Families who are faced with the challenge of social, emotional, cultural, economic or geographical isolation can experience great difficulty in accessing early childhood education services for their children. Paroo Contact Children’s Mobile services an area over 500km and includes Cunnamulla and like all mobile services, provide access to educational based play sessions, family support, early intervention and social inclusion activities to rural remote children and their families. The Mobile groups have existing infrastructure, services areas and equipment to be able to continue and more importantly improve and grow their services if new funding was made available for them from State, Federal or philanthropic. These mobile services enable equal access and continuation of child development activities to the children and their families in remote and isolated areas of outback Australia.

3. A16. QUEENSLAND STATE COUNCIL

“That ICPA Qld Inc. continue to lobby the Qld State Government to prioritise funding options for the Remote Kindy Pilot Program (RKPP) continuation and expansion beyond 2018.”

Carried

Explanation: Presently there are 38 schools across Queensland engaged in the RKPP, with over 100 children enrolled. We strongly believe that the program is extremely beneficial for not only the kindy aged child but also to their families, the school and the wider community. 2018 has been a year of consolidation and it is essential that the program can be offered to even more communities in 2019 and beyond.

4. A17. QUEENSLAND STATE COUNCIL

“That ICPA Qld Inc. support ICPA Federal Council in their lobby with the Federal Education Minister regarding the changes to In-Home Care Guidelines from 2 July 2018.”

Carried

Explanation: It is vital that families in Rural and Remote Australia have access to adequate In Home Care and ICPA Qld support ICPA Federal Council in their dealings with the Federal Government to

provide the best possible assistance package.

5. S6. BOLLON BRANCH

“That ICPA Qld Inc. lobbies the Department of Education and Training to deliver face to face Early Childhood Education services to remote areas.”

Carried

Explanation: Access to early childhood education is just as important to remote families as it is to urban families. Both State and Commonwealth Governments have committed to ‘Universal Access to Early Childhood Services.’ According to Australian Government DET website –

‘Universal access ensures that a quality preschool program (also referred to as kindergarten in some states) is available for all children in the year before full-time school.’

In a media statement on September 1, 2016 our Premier stated, *“We want to build on the Government’s provision of 15 hours each week of kindergarten for all our four-year-olds.”*

Despite these commitments, the delivery of these services is seemingly inconsistent in some areas. We wonder why it is that places which once had a face to face service no longer do? These areas have not had recent significant population decrease for example, there is still a demand. Surely if we’ve had these services before we can have them again? Whether in the form of government funded Mobile Kindergartens or the Remote Kindy Pilot Program the benefits to children and families are enormous. It is the government’s responsibility to ensure that all children can access essential education services.

6. S7. DAWSON VALLEY BRANCH

“That ICPA Qld Inc. lobbies the Department of Education, Training and Employment and other relevant bodies for a change to regulations and restrictions around waivers for Kindergarten teachers.”

Carried

Explanation: Finding qualified staff, for a part time rural Kindy, can be extremely difficult. As part of the requirements provided by the Department you can apply for a waiver if you cannot find a suitable or fully qualified Early Childhood teacher. This waiver would cover you for a number of different teacher options if you cannot find a fully qualified Kindergarten teacher. However, once you have applied for a waiver, you then lose funding for that period of time. This in turn puts a huge financial burden on a rural part time program, which then may become unable to cover the cost of staff wages and other running costs. This may eventually cause the program to close. A possible solution for this issue is for the Department to change the regulations and restrictions around waivers. If a rural Kindergarten service has no other option than to apply for a waiver for a teacher, then funding should still be available to the service to ensure it can continue to operate.

7. S8. DAWSON VALLEY BRANCH

“That ICPA Qld Inc. lobbies the Department of Education, Training and Employment and other relevant bodies to commit to providing teaching staff for rural part time Kindergarten services.”

Carried

Explanation: In a rural community it is quite often the case that the kindy program only runs for two or three days a week. This is simply because of the lower numbers of children in a rural community. Currently in order to run a Kindergarten program the service needs to adhere to and follow regulations and planning requirements provided by The Early Childhood Education and Care Section of the Department of Education. Because the Department has such a major role in overseeing the Kindergarten program, and the guidelines they need to follow, one possible avenue that would be of great assistance to rural communities who are trying to find a kindy teacher, would be for Education Queensland to commit to providing teaching staff for rural part time Kindergarten services. These staff could be shared between the school and the kindergarten to create a full time position. This would mean that the kindergarten program gets a quality teacher, and because it is then a full time position, would attract more teachers to rural areas. This then benefits the school, as well as the early education of the students feeding into the school.

