

PORTFOLIO REPORTS - STATE COUNCIL

SPECIAL & SPECIFIC NEEDS EDUCATION REPORT

Amanda Nixon – Portfolio Holder, March 2018

Specific and Special issues include early identification of learning difficulties, access and cost of services, support and training for families and educators and support for gifted students.

The beginning of the 2018 school year will see the WA Department of Education supply of the following: Specialist support through the appointment of an Independent Learning Coordinator (ILC) in 10 regional schools. A Regional Learning Specialist team in the curriculum areas of science, social science, mathematics and English. An additional 300 education assistants and 50 Aboriginal and Islander education officers employed at WA schools over the next few years. Education assistants employed at 238 schools across kindergarten to Year 2, with most allocated to socially disadvantaged students. The indigenous education officers will be employed at 74 schools in regional WA, including high schools and remote community schools.

ICPA welcomed the reversal to the 25 per cent funding cut for programs for gifted and talented students. ICPA WA greatly appreciate the immediate support received from Perth Modernian Society President Peter Farr in lobbying support for the education cuts that effected regional WA. Many society members are regional community members, and many city parents contributed to the campaign. Regional students who are enrolled in a Gifted and Talented Secondary Selective Entrance Program at select metropolitan secondary schools are able to board at City Beach Residential College. The third week in March is the annual National Gifted Awareness Week. www.clearingskies.com.au

ICPA WA supported the petition to prevent the closure of Noah's Ark WA- the state's only specialist toy and resource library. In October 2017 Noah's Ark Library received notice it would be shut down by the end of 2017. It lends specially adapted toys to children with disabilities for the past 42 years. It is based in Morley, Perth and operates a mobile delivery service to regional areas. As at 25th January 2018, the library remains closed. The Independent living center is still in the application process for a preferred applicant to take on Noah's Ark WA services.

ICPA WA State Council support Federal Council as they lobby for:

- The Patient Assistance Travel Scheme to include subsidised travel and accommodation for diagnosed children needing to see Specialists in the field of Specific or Special Needs wherever those specialists may be located; whether in a hospital or not.
- Provision of a Medicare rebate for services provided by Telehealth clinicians to rural and remote families.
- All rural and remote students have access to identification and intervention for learning difficulties
- Specific training/PD for teachers to cater for students with learning difficulties, and talented & gifted programs.
- A further lobby in the Tertiary Portfolio also relates to the Specific Education Needs Portfolio: that universities that provide teacher training include modules such as Autistic Spectrum Disorders (ASDs) in their curriculum.