

SPECIFIC NEEDS PORTFOLIO CONFERENCE REPORT – 2020

I am delighted to present my first report as leader of the Specific Needs Portfolio. During delegations in March, we met with the Community Resource Unit (CRU) and Outback Futures to learn what they do and to discuss ways in which we can assist each other to advocate for children with Specific Needs and in particular, children living in rural and remote QLD. Unfortunately, due to COVID-19, our meeting with Autism QLD was cancelled. State Council looks forward to continue working with these organisations in the future.

Both Specific Needs motions for the 2019 Conference referred to the Parent Resource – Orange Book written jointly with the Queensland Child and Youth Clinical Network. Although this document cannot be distributed through the department, State Council has the promotion of this document within the Specific Needs, Health and Early Childhood sectors as a priority and will continue to do so for the foreseeable future.

COVID-19 and the increased access to telehealth for all Australians has shown that many services can be accessed by rural and remote families without the cost and time incurred in travelling to major centres for specialists' appointments. Most organisations and families are better equipped for telehealth appointments and State Council will continue to push for more frequent access to Health services for rural and remote children.

Mental Health is an area of growing concern and the importance of this topic has been a major lobby and consideration with COVID-19, the drought, bushfires and floods. State Council will continue to meet and work with organisations like Headspace in this area to ensure that rural and remote children are not forgotten.

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