



Australian Childcare Alliance Queensland

Embargoed until 00.01 Monday September 21, 2020

'What Queensland parents want. What our children need' ACA Queensland calls on all parties to commit to its election policy manifesto

As Queensland emerges from under the crippling health and economic crisis; the peak body for the state's early learning (childcare) services, has called on both parties to commit to policies that prioritise the needs of 300,000 Queensland children and the early childhood educators who educate and care for them.

The Australian Childcare Alliance Queensland (ACA Qld) has presented all parties with its non-partisan election policy manifesto "**What Queensland parents want. What our children need**". If adopted, these cost effective policies will:

- empower parents to choose which quality early learning (childcare) service they want their child to attend;
- prioritise the educational needs of Queensland children;
- reverse the trend of Queensland having the most developmentally vulnerable children in all of Australia¹;
- offer certainty of employment for early childhood educators/teachers, particularly in regional Queensland;
- avert an unnecessary increase in costs for parents or force them to withdraw their child from their quality early learning service;
- create more financial headroom to allow early learning (childcare) services to employ more educators; and
- place the needs of parents ahead of the profits of property developers.

The President of ACA Qld, Ms Majella Fitzsimmons, said early learning services had proved the bedrock of the Queensland economy, particularly during the height of this shocking pandemic.

"Our member services have successfully kept children in their education and care, safe and calm, whilst they continued to learn and develop," Ms Fitzsimmons said. "With a third of our parents working in healthcare and emergency services, we ensured our early learning (childcare) services remained open, even during the initial shock lockdown."

However, Ms Fitzsimmons, said families now expect all parties to commit to policies that will allow early learning services to remain viable whilst ensuring no Queensland child falls through the cracks.

A key plank of the ACA Qld election policy manifesto seeks to have the next Queensland Government extend universal funding (by five years) for all four year olds in Queensland kindergartens. If this happens, Queensland parents can avoid being either forced to withdraw their child from their high-quality service or face increased costs of about \$43 a week.²

"Neither of these options are acceptable and shouldn't be to any party," Ms Fitzsimmons said. "At a time of deep and traumatic disruption to their daily lives, Queensland families, and children, in particular, should not be forced to endure more unnecessary disruption and uncertainty."

Other ACA Qld policies, recommended to all parties, include extending the existing KindyLinQ pilot program to all early learning services, banishing the current unsafe and discriminatory practice of forcing disadvantaged children into state-based school facilities.

¹ Queensland ECEC programs facts and figures Nov 2019

² <https://earlychildhood.qld.gov.au/fundingAndSupport/Documents/qkfs-base-subsidy-rates.PDF> LDC \$1705 pa divided by 40 weeks

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Permanently waiving payroll tax for all educational services will allow the employment of more educators and introducing proper planning oversight will help reverse the current oversupply crisis hitting the sector, to the detriment of all families.

“On behalf of all of Queensland families, we are committing cost effective policies for the next government to adopt,” Ms Fitzsimmons said. “These policies look beyond the current COVID-19 crisis, to build a stronger future for our families, the communities in which they live and the economy of the state.” ENDS

‘**What Queensland parents want. What our children need**’ election policy manifesto can be downloaded [here](#)

ACA QLD has been meeting with MPs from all sides of politics. [link here](#)

The leadership of ACA Qld are available for media interviews embargoed until Monday September 21.

President:	Ms Majella Fitzsimmons	0410 526 136	Townsville-based
Vice President:	Mr Jae Fraser	0408 873 492	Gold Coast-based
CEO:	Mr Brent Stokes	0408 339 220	Brisbane-based

About

ACA Qld is the peak body for early learning (childcare) services representing over 850 early learning services, who employ 13,500 educators, who educate and care for around 180,000 children of over 245,000 parents in Queensland.

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