



# Australian Childcare Alliance Queensland

Thursday September 24, 2020

## **‘What Queensland parents want. What our children need’ Affordable childcare *must* be front and centre of the QLD election**

A looming shortfall in government funding, for all four year olds in kindergarten, will soon force Queensland parents to either withdraw their children from their high quality early learning (childcare) service or face increased costs of \$43 a week.<sup>1</sup>

Ahead of the Queensland election, all major parties are being called on by the Australian Childcare Alliance Queensland (ACA Qld) to avoid this funding cliff by committing to policies that prioritise the needs of 300,000 Queensland children and the 30,000 early childhood educators/teachers, who educate and care for them.

Queensland’s peak body for the Early Childhood Education and Care (ECEC) sector seeks to have the next Queensland Government extend universal funding (by five years) for all four year olds in Queensland kindergartens. Currently the Government funding ends in 2021.

The President of ACA Qld, Ms Majella Fitzsimmons said parents were already under undue economic pressure and educators needed certainty of employment.

“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,” Ms Fitzsimmons said. “We are in high demand of educators, especially in regional and remote Queensland and yet, we can’t offer any employment long term.”

The universal funding solution is a key plank of the ACA Qld’s its high impact, non-partisan election policy manifesto **‘What Queensland parents want. What our children need’** that has now been presented to all parties.

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 Australia<sup>2</sup>;
- 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.

Ms 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.

<sup>1</sup> <https://earlychildhood.qld.gov.au/fundingAndSupport/Documents/qkfs-base-subsidy-rates.PDF> LDC \$1705 pa divided by 40 weeks

<sup>2</sup> Queensland ECEC programs facts and figures Nov 2019



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“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.

Other ACA Qld policies 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.

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 [from 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

<b>President:</b>	<b>Ms Majella Fitzsimmons</b>	0410 526 136	Townsville-based
<b>Vice President:</b>	<b>Mr Jae Fraser</b>	0408 873 492	Gold Coast-based
<b>CEO:</b>	<b>Mr Brent Stokes</b>	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.*

**Australian Childcare Alliance Queensland**

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