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# QUEENSLAND INDEPENDENT EDUCATION UNION



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Monday, 11 February 2008

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## EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION



### CHAPTER BRIEFING No. 1

## DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION DOES NOT REQUIRE CENTRES TO REMAIN OPEN ON LAST DAY OF TERM 4

### ACSEA CONTINUES TO STALL NEGOTIATIONS

Dear Colleagues

Members in community kindergartens can confidently reject the attempt by the Crèche and Kindergarten Association Inc (C&K) to dictate to Committees that the last day of term four cannot be used as a "cleaning day".

The claim that centres would lose DECKAS funding from the State Government if they were not open to students on the last day of term four has proven unfounded, with the Department of Education, Training and the Arts confirming in writing that it will impose no such penalty on centres.

Any threat to funding emanates solely from C&K.

#### **C&K actions unjust**

At the end of last year, C&K conducted a survey of kindergartens to determine the number which did not have children present on the last day of term four in 2007.

Some members reported that C&K consultants claimed the survey was being conducted at the request of the Department.

However, in its correspondence to QIEU, the Department of Education noted that it did not ask C&K to conduct such a survey (a copy of QIEU's letter to the Department of Education and a copy of the Department's response can be found at [www.qieu.asn.au/earlychildhoodeducation](http://www.qieu.asn.au/earlychildhoodeducation)).

This advice from the Department reinforces QIEU's stance late last year that any request to remain open to students on the last day of term is a C&K decision and is imposed as part of C&K's affiliation criteria.

While C&K affiliation requirements around physical resources and curriculum are valid, its attempts to usurp the responsibility of the Committee to manage your kindergarten around issues such as cleaning days is irrational given the further imposition this has on the already stretched time of teachers and assistants.

The State Government has entrusted C&K with the distribution of DECKAS funding not the establishment of funding policy.

The threat to withhold such funding from a centre because of an issue that is a Committee management decision (and in the absence of any Government requirement to the contrary) is unjust and shows a lack of respect for the management Committees of affiliated community kindergartens.

### **Members seek confirmation from Committees**

It is sad that C&K, by its actions last year, has attempted to override both the management decisions of Committees and the custom and practice of numerous years.

Where a Committee, on behalf of the parents of children attending a kindergarten, and the staff have reached agreement that the last day of term four be designated as a "clean-up" day, action needs to be taken to protect this position.

Members who are employed in centres which have previously benefited from this custom and practice should now seek formal clarification from their centre's Committee as to their policy on this arrangement.

Attached to this briefing is a fact sheet outlining the Department of Education's stance on the issue of DECKAS funding and the last day of term four being designated as a "clean-up" day.

This fact sheet is provided to assist members in discussing this important issue with their centre's Committee.

Where appropriate, members should also provide their centre Committee with a copy of the attached letter which seeks the Committee's written commitment to continue to designate the last day(s) of term four as a clean-up day(s).

Members should make appropriate amendments to the letter, where needed, in light of custom and practice at their centre.

### **Members will be supported**

**QIEU reiterates its commitment that it will fully support any member who may have been/or is threatened in any way because of the decision by the Committee to close a kindergarten on the last day(s) of term four.**

Please advise the QIEU office on (07) 3839 7020 if any member or Committee is subjected to any threat by C&K in relation to this issue.

### **ACSEA negotiations remain stalled**

ACSEA continues to refuse to enter negotiations around the issues identified for further negotiation in the existing Certified Agreement.

As a consequence, QIEU has written to the ACSEA Board seeking a meeting with them in an attempt to resolve this deadlock.

ACSEA cannot continue to wantonly hide behind the review of DECKAS funding while employees in centres continue to be disadvantaged across a range of conditions.

Some courage and a reasoned argument to the State Government on the necessity of additional funding are needed from the Board, not glib assurances and facetious excuses.

Member patience on these negotiations is being exhausted and the Board must accept its responsibilities and act.

Further correspondence will be forwarded to members as we continue to seek the resolution of these important issues.

Kind regards



**TERRY BURKE**  
**GENERAL SECRETARY**



# EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION

## FACT SHEET

### Designation of last day of term four for “clean-up”

#### KEY ISSUES

- Department of Education confirms no requirement for centres to remain open on last day of term four
- Authority to designate last day(s) of term four as a “clean-up” day(s) is the centre Committee’s decision

#### ACTION

QIEU members are asked to discuss this important issue with their centre Committee and where appropriate seek the Committee’s written commitment to continue to designate the last day(s) of term four as a “clean-up” day(s)

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- The custom and practice of some community kindergartens in closing on the last day(s) of term to enable a “clean-up” has been in place for numerous years.
- Whenever a statement has been made by C&K that a “clean-up” day is not permitted by DECKAS funding, QIEU has sought a copy of any documentation which imposes that restriction.
- No documentation has ever been provided to QIEU which would support the assertion that a “clean-up” day is prohibited by the Department of Education through DECKAS funding.
- Late last year C&K provided the following written advice to centres:  
*“Under the DECKAS guidelines the service must be open for the full 41 weeks a year and this includes the last day of the kindy term. DETA is keeping a close check on this aspect of the funding this year and has asked us to deduct funding from any centre that closes before the final day of the term.”*
- QIEU wrote to the Department of Education Training and the Arts on 14 December 2007 and sought the following information:  
*“[W]e formally seek your advice as to whether the Department has requested that C&K conduct a survey in relation to the attendance of children on 14 December 2007. We also seek your advice in relation to any instruction that DECKAS funding must be repaid by kindergartens where children were not in attendance on 14 December 2007.”*
- The Department’s response contained, *inter alia*, the following statement:  
*“[T]he Department has not imposed any requests on C&K to conduct a survey in relation to the attendance of children in DECKAS-funded community kindergartens on 14 December 2007 or to take any other actions.”*
- The Department’s letter also makes it clear that the issue may be covered by C&K’s affiliation requirements but that these requirements are set by C&K.

**A copy of QIEU’s letter to the Department of Education and a copy of the Department’s response can be found at QIEU’s website:  
[www.qieu.asn.au/earlychildhoodeducation](http://www.qieu.asn.au/earlychildhoodeducation)**

Dear

**Re: Clean-up day – end of term four**

We note that in previous years the Committee of our centre has determined that the last day of term four can be a pupil free day to allow for a clean-up to occur.

It is the role of the committee to make such decisions having regard to the interests of children, their parents and staff.

We are aware that the Department of Education Training and the Arts does not have any policy which impacts on the Committee's ability to make such a decision.

Because there was a level of unnecessary confusion around this issue toward the end of last year, we seek the formal commitment of our Committee regarding the designation of a pupil free day(s) (for clean-up purposes) at the conclusion of term four each year and until such time as this resolution is specifically withdrawn by the Committee.

We thank the Committee for its consideration of this matter in the interests of the good operation of the centre.

Kind regards