

Childcare

Agreed to by the VFF Policy Council
Meeting 188
7 December 2022

Policy Statement

General Principles

1. The VFF believes regional and rurally based Victorians must have easy access to essential basic childcare and early education services in their local community to ensure the long-term wellbeing of families and ongoing viability of regional and rural Victoria.
2. The VFF values the differences between regional communities and farming families across commodities in Victoria, and recognises that farming families throughout Victoria will benefit more greatly from increases in targeted and specific childcare services, such as family daycare centres, flexible hours care, out of school care and early learning centres to best meet their needs.
3. The VFF supports initiatives to increase the rate of regional and rural childcare, family daycare and early childhood education options to ensure the longterm strength of regional and rural communities, as well as providing rural and regionally based families with equality of opportunity for educational and social parity with metropolitan areas.
4. The VFF supports increased resources and services for farming families and children with complex medical needs to allow all regional and rurally based Victorians to lead quality lives as part of their community, regardless of their proximity to major centres.
5. The VFF supports initiatives to attract and retain childcare staff in rural and regional locations to ensure the reliability and ongoing availability of childcare services.
6. The VFF supports initiatives to make childcare more affordable on an ongoing basis, particularly for farmers who are ineligible for current streams of government funding support due to restrictive assets tests.
7. The VFF supports initiatives to address and support parents, particularly mother's access to education and work opportunities, notably in cases where previous work or study has lapsed due to parental and childcare obligations, to ensure that all rural and regional Victorians are given the opportunity to actively and fully contribute to their community.
8. The VFF supports the proliferation of community based organisations and local government initiatives to fund and support regionally appropriate childcare in addition to state government supported childcare centres to address community need.



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- 9.** The VFF supports sustainable funding models and ongoing expansion of government operated regional and rural childcare centres and kindergarten services to provide greater support for families returning to work with children.
- 10.** The VFF supports targeted funding for families who must travel outside their local communities to receive appropriate childcare, to bolster parents' ability to return to work and reduce the financial burden of travel and childcare fees on families.
- 11.** The VFF supports revision of the Healthcare Card asset testing to instead focus on take home income testing for farming families, to enable access to affordable childcare, improve on-farm safety and support parents, particularly mother's career progression.