

Challenging Quinn

In the Wainuiomata News August 17, National List MP and Hutt South candidate Paul Quinn made reference to the "millions" held by kindergartens. The Wellington Kindergarten Association responds:

Paul Quinn used the Wellington Region Free Kindergarten Association (WRFKA) as an example of how his Government was taking from the "haves" to give to the "have nots", citing the Government's extension of the 20 hours funding to Playcentre and Kohanga, and their cuts to teacher-led services.

He uses WRFKA's 2010 supposed "surplus" of \$3million as an example of the "extra" money that kindergarten associations had.

As chair of the board of WRFKA, I need to challenge Mr Quinn.

To provide some context, our association is a not-for-profit organisation.

In this capacity, we reinvest any surpluses back into our 60+ kindergartens (from Seatoun through to Levin) and therefore children and their families.

Cash reserves generated from our 30 June 2010 \$3m surplus were invested back into kindergartens to increase the number of places available to children by providing kindergarten education to communities in need and extending the capacity of existing ones.

Secondly, the 2010 annual report he quotes from reflects our position prior to the funding cuts, which came in to effect in February (of this year).

The Government's decision to cut funding has seen millions cut from our income resulting in a loss of \$48,000 per kindergarten for the 30 June 2012 year-end.

We would welcome his attendance at our upcoming AGM to see the funding cuts reflected in our annual report (22 September,

7pm, Tawa Salvation Army Hall).

Mr Quinn also implied that funding taken from kindergartens was being redirected to Playcentre and Kohanga.

While we wholeheartedly support increased funding to those services, this assertion is simply untrue.

The government cut \$600 million from the early childhood education budget, targeting services that employ 100 per cent qualified teachers and provide high quality early childhood education to over 93,000 children.

It did not reinvest it elsewhere in the sector.

Given he is a member of the current government, I would expect him to be better informed. As a public servant, it is his duty to be well informed and provide accurate information to his community.

CAROLE OLMEDO

Chair, Wellington Region Free Kindergarten Association