



# Local body support for the ECE campaign

## Why local bodies?

- They are grass roots, local organisations
- They are charged with responsibility for the 'social wellbeing' of their communities
- They are local leaders
- Their activities attract local media and individual local body politicians are always looking for photo ops

## How do we get their support?

Local bodies (Mayor, Deputy Mayor and councillors) represent the community. They should not support an issue until they have a community mandate. That means they need to be lobbied before they take action in support of an issue.

They need to get the message that this is an important issue in their community. The most effective way to lobby is for a delegation of parents/local supporters/members to lobby individual councillors. If only members lobby them they will get the message that this is about self-interest.

### Step 1:

Set up a delegation, make an appointment with a councillor or the mayor/deputy (contact details will be on the council website) and meet them. This could be at the council or you could invite them to come to your ECE centre or kindergarten to see first hand what the issues are. If there is an appropriate event (e.g. a meeting of parents to discuss ECE cuts) that would be even better and a good opportunity to take their photo signing the ECE petition. (To send to local media).

### Step 2:

Provide them with background information, lots of local information about the impact locally (e.g. centres/kindergartens where fees are going up, information about qualified teachers, number of children affected etc) and ask them to support the campaign by putting a resolution to council.

### Step 3:

#### The resolution.

The council has no power to change the situation, but the council does have power to reflect the community's concerns and the resolution should include an action the council can take (e.g. – contacting the Minister/PM on behalf of the community to express the community's concerns and ask for a remedy).

We should at least assist with putting the resolution together and it should be in three parts:

1. Noting the issue and the impact on the community
2. Noting the high level of concern

### 3. Committing the council to an action

#### **Step 4:**

##### **The council meeting**

The resolution must be promoted by a councillor (the mover) and a seconder. They will ensure it gets on the appropriate council agenda for discussion and voting. Council staff will prepare a background paper. (That's why they need lots of information on the big issues, the local impact and the issues around why we want a well-educated community, the cost-benefit analysis etc).

It is vital to have people at that meeting (parents and members). Most councils have 30 minutes public speaking time (usually three minutes per speaker, with questions from councillors following each speaker) at the beginning of meetings. It's important to have speakers lined up and prepared. A good combination would be a teacher to speak on the professional issues and one or more parents to speak on the impact and tell their stories. It is powerful to have around four (or more) speakers and/or a large group of supporters. Wearing T-shirts (e.g. ECE cuts T-shirts) is a good idea.

#### **Step 5:**

##### **Media**

One of the good things about council meetings is that media will be present. It's a good idea to ring them anyway prior to the meeting and offer to provide information and parents to interview. It's also a good idea to contact larger media (e.g. Dominion Post in the case of Wellington regional local bodies) who may not generally come but would for a good story with relevance across their circulation area.

Make sure your delegation is photo-ready – i.e. in T-shirts, with children, carrying petitions etc and make sure they are ready to tell their personal stories (e.g. "our family was gutted to hear we have to pay \$XX more dollars, we are already stretched to the limit etc").

#### **Step 6:**

##### **Follow up**

The resolution should include an action. It is important to arrange with the mover to meet at a later date to find out the response of the Minister/Prime Minister. This will provide a further media opportunity and the opportunity to report back to members and parents.