

To Whom It May Concern:

**Re: Expenditure on Children in the Northern Territory: Productivity
Commission Submission**

I am writing to stress the importance of continued funding and support of the remote service known as Katherine Isolated Children's Service (KICS) in the Northern Territory. This service provides much needed support, education and resources to children and their parents who reside in remote areas and are separated from these vital resources by great distances.

My children and I have personally benefited from the KICS service. My husband and I moved to Victoria River Downs Station, located 400kms South West of Katherine in the Northern Territory, in 2006. After the birth of our first child at the Katherine Hospital, we headed back out to the station to continue our work and raise a family. As a young new Mum, I was confronted with the raw challenge of raising a child in a remote location, with very limited support.

Thank goodness for KICS! I would always look forward to attending the KICS playgroup sessions, whether they were at the station we were living on or being hosted nearby. The kids would have a great time with the fun and stimulating activities that KICS would set up for them. The adults would discuss a wide range of parenting issues and concerns.

The Health Clinics are great for answering questions parents may have about their children's behaviour and development, but there is something about being able to sit under a shady tree and have a relaxed chat whilst the children play. I can't stress enough how valuable it was for me to be able to discuss in this relaxed environment any concerns relating to my children, with the KICS Field Team Members. There may be information online, but nothing compares to having a face -to -face conversation with another parent or childhood educator.

What a shame it would be not to support these young families who wish to live and work on the land and in remote communities, contributing to the region and raising young people who will have a love of these areas and many of whom will return to live and work when they are grown.

For me, KICS provided stimulating play and social engagement for my children, as well as information and support for me as a parent, and I think it would be a huge detriment for young families living in remote areas to miss out on this. I urge the government to continue funding this unique and wonderful service for our families.

Sincerely,

Katny Dyer /

26th June 2019