



## **MEDIA RELEASE**

**Wednesday, 5 November 2014**

# **Coniston DOCS walk out in staffing protest**

Staff at the Coniston office of the Department of Community Services walked off the job for one hour at 12 noon today in protest at a critical lack of staffing which is leaving vulnerable children in the Illawarra at risk said the Public Service Association (PSA).

Shattered staff at the Coniston office took similar action in 2013 following a tragic and avoidable incident in Wollongong.

The office had lost an entire team, equivalent to six full-time caseworkers.

Their action began a domino effect with Community Services offices across the state walking off the job to highlight their own concerns about staffing levels.

The situation has since declined further with up to 10 child protection positions lost at Coniston in the past two years.

“For all the talk from the Government, the fact is the staffing situation has not improved,” said PSA Assistant General Secretary, Steve Turner.

“The plight of these at-risk children weigh heavily on the minds of these workers but they are so overwhelmed by the number of children who require their attention it is simply not possible to visit every child.”

“That’s an enormous burden to carry with you and absolutely soul destroying for these people, many of whom who have young families of their own.”

“There are simply insufficient staffing resources to safeguard the number of at-risk children that come to their attention.”

“The plight of the most vulnerable and helpless in our society needs to be properly addressed once and for all with the proper resourcing of expert Government services.”

“Our members have had enough. They don’t take the decision to walk off the job lightly. But they are extremely concerned that another tragedy is just around the corner.”