



15 December 2015

## ADHC bulletin Meeting with the Minister

### ***PSA meets with Minister for Disability Services***

On 8 December 2015, PSA Assistant General Secretary Steve Turner and Departmental Committee delegates met with the Minister for Disability Services, John Ajaka to discuss the Baird Government's plans to privatise disability services. This meeting followed the PSA's state-wide strike action last week which demonstrated member commitment and strength to fight for their jobs and conditions.

You can view news coverage of the strike [HERE](http://psa.asn.au/december-4-2015-psa-media-coverage/) (<http://psa.asn.au/december-4-2015-psa-media-coverage/>)

### ***Discussions move forward but still a long way to go...***

Minister Ajaka began by thanking the PSA for agreeing to meet and recognised the PSA position is very clear in relation to privatisation.

The Minister and FACS Secretary Michael Coutts-Trotter advised that the timetable for the NDIS roll out would commence shortly and they were keen for the PSA to be involved in these discussions. They recognised that any discussions would be on a "without prejudice" basis and would not change our position with regards to privatisation.

Your union representatives reiterated our opposition to the privatisation and explained the two central elements of our "real choice" campaign involve:

- Client choice: maintaining client right to access ADHC as a service provider; and
- Employee choice: the right to choose to remain in the public sector or have the option of a voluntary redundancy.

The PSA also took the opportunity to raise concerns relating to recent FACS communiques claiming all employment conditions for staff who transfer have been "agreed", and we advised that:

1. We do not accept that that employment conditions had been "agreed".
2. In fact, no discussions, negotiations or consultation have occurred with the PSA on staff transfer conditions.
3. We want proper consultation and negotiation on any employment arrangements for transferring staff.
4. An "eight week transfer package and two years employment protection" is inadequate and must include the protection of current NSW public service redundancy entitlements.
5. The PSA wants real choice for staff, meaning access to redeployment, voluntary redundancy or transfer at the election of the employee.

### ***PSA delegates: "don't deny us a living wage"***

Minister Ajaka made the Government's position clear stating they would not move from their decision of granting up to 8 weeks transfer package and only two (2) years employment protection including pay and conditions.

The PSA responded by raising the important issue of a living wage post transfer. A critical issue for members is that without guarantees of a living wage and protection of conditions post transfer, staff would ultimately suffer a drop in real wages in the private sector. If wages and conditions (such as penalty rates for weekend and shift work) are not protected in the future

many ADHC employees will choose to leave the sector.

The responsibilities of staff working in disabilities are high and undermining current public sector conditions would result in the loss of qualified and committed staff from the disability sector. The PSA also warned that any cuts would disproportionately affect women, as the ADHC workforce is predominantly female. The consequence of undervaluing disability workers would further entrench inequalities in "caring" industries.

PSA delegates emphasised that staff feel they are being disrespected because they work in a caring industry and that unilaterally applied transfer arrangements made members feel they were being underpaid and undervalued. The PSA reiterated the need for a proper staff employment package which provides recognition and protection.

The Minister and the Secretary responded by claiming their research showed that the NDIS would provide sufficient funding for staff employed privately in accommodation services, and also showed very little difference between award wages in the public and private sectors. They undertook to provide the PSA with that information.

### ***The Government finally comes to the table to consult***

The Minister invited the PSA to take part in consultation around transfer arrangements for staff and also inclusion in the broader stakeholder consultation on models to transfer ADHC services and functions. We intend to take the Minister up on his offer. This is a significant opportunity for you, through your union, to provide feedback to the Government.

### ***The campaign continues***

The PSA remains steadfast in our position that ADHC must remain a provider of disability services and we will continue to campaign for this.

We will be working locally to increase our already thriving networks of parents, carers and advocacy groups to expand your campaign and convince the Government that removing ADHC as a provider will result in disaster for the sector and for people with disability.

Contact your organising team to get involved in the campaign at [FACSOrganising@psa.asn.au](mailto:FACSOrganising@psa.asn.au)

### ***Planning underway for a phased transition of services***

The Minister then talked through the Government's planned transition phases which were:

**Stage 1:** The Minister indicated he has an open mind as to what strategy will be pursued for the transition of ADHC services. Stakeholder consultations will influence the thinking on this process.

**Stage 2:** Once stakeholder views are known, there will be discussion and feedback on implementing the strategy.

**Stage 3:** Formalisation and implementation of the strategy above.

The PSA was invited to participate from stage one of this process. The Minister recognised that any discussions or input into this process would be "without prejudice" and would not change our opposition to the privatisation.

The PSA invited the Minister to meet with PSA delegates and carers concerned about losing ADHC services. The Minister agreed to this and said that he wanted to hear the views of all those affected including delegates and carers.

Talk to your colleagues about joining the PSA

Now more than ever it is important for ADHC staff to be part of the PSA. Talk to your colleagues today and ask them about joining.

It is important that as many people as possible take an active part in the campaign. Together we must fight for choice, for protection of jobs and conditions.

## **Join the PSA**

**[membership.psa.asn.au/join](http://membership.psa.asn.au/join)**



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**DEFENDING  
PUBLIC SERVICES**

by protecting jobs and workplace rights