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Big business budget cuts child protection jobs

The Public Service Association of NSW (PSA) is outraged that 82 jobs in statutory child protection have been cut in the NSW budget.

The move comes after Community Services caseworkers in offices across the state walked off the job on 19 and 26 March in response to the NSW Government's failure to properly resource child protection.

Acting PSA General Secretary Steve Turner said with the Government's own figures showing an increase in children reported as being at "risk of significant harm" and only 1 in 4 getting a face to face response from Community Services, this is not the time to cut positions.

"This is worse than doing nothing," said Steve Turner, "the Government are actually making a desperate situation worse."

"This budget has been all about the big end of town, big business and big ticket infrastructure but has completely lost sight of what is really important in our society."

"Cutting these jobs in an enormously demanding area of statutory Government responsibility is simply a tragedy."

"The state's child protection services are chronically under resourced despite the Government having a statutory responsibility to protect the most vulnerable children in the community."

"The fact is that privatisation of these services is seeing a growing number of at-risk children miss out on being seen by a caseworker."

"Tragically, we know that no contact with child protection workers can have tragic consequences that should be avoidable."

"The \$200 million in the budget allocated to out of home care is not to assist kids at risk but rather for the continued transition of this service to an ill equipped private sector."

"Despite the best efforts of overwhelmed staff, inadequate resources and understaffing is preventing the undertaking of essential face-to-face work with vulnerable children and their families. Now those staff are going to be under additional pressure and more children will be placed at risk."

"The PSA calls upon Premier Baird to immediately re-think these job cuts and further allocation of funds to the non-government sector to prevent the tragedy of any child falling through what are increasingly wide cracks." Mr Turner said.