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In reply please quote: *XT:ljm: A14/1257*

26 August, 2015

Deidre Mulkerin
Western cluster operations
Dept. of Community Services
Locked Bag 4028
ASHFIELD NSW 2131

Dear Ms Mulkerin,

OOHC Audit – Need for Resources to Support Casework Staff

The PSA is advised of the large amount of 'audit' work that Managers Casework and Caseworkers are being required to do without additional dedicated resources. The department has recently issued an OOHC audit tool that needs to be completed for every child in OOHC. This is a large piece of work to be completed by Managers Casework (MCW) and Caseworkers without any additional resources. I understand some district have organized additional dedicated resources to do this work. Some districts have not organized additional resources and the audit comes as a major imposition on casework staff who are already working to capacity (many of whom are already working beyond contract hours).

The PSA is seriously concerned that the lack of provision of dedicated resources in some Districts is leading to casework staff (MCWs and Caseworkers) being removed from undertaking direct casework with children in OOHC and their carers. A large number of PSA members have raised concerns relating to the extensive and cumbersome amount of office work associated with the Audit. The PSA recognizes that the Audit is an essential requirement for accreditation and as such supports this important function. However, the PSA believes that casework staff should be freed up from 'administrative tasks' to focus on casework with children and young people, an objective I believe the Department and the Minister also share.

Members have identified this as a serious resource issue and have sought the Association's assistance to ensure they are able to focus on their direct casework responsibilities. The Association respectfully asks that steps are undertaken by the Department to identify what resources and strategies will be put in place to address the work impact on the frontline staff. I would appreciate your prompt attention to this matter. I note that when the Association raised this same issue with the Department in 2009, this resulted in a satisfactory resolution and additional resources were arranged to undertake this work, thus minimizing the impact on casework staff with direct casework responsibility. I look forward to your response.

Should you have enquiries about this issue, please do not hesitate to contact Xanthe Thomson on 1300 772 679..

Yours faithfully,



Steve Turner
A/General Secretary