



Child protection tragedy highlights need for private sector regulation says union

Disturbing reports today regarding the severe neglect of a child in foster care once again highlight the failures of the privatisation of Out of Home Care services said the Public Service Association (PSA).

Despite past tragedies, the Baird Government has continued to fund the ill equipped private sector in the takeover of Out of Home Care.

Worse, says the PSA, which covers child protection workers, with the Baird Government's privatisation agenda, these private providers are not required to account for their public funds nor meet benchmarked service standards.

"When things go wrong FACS wears the blame," said PSA Assistant General Secretary, Steve Turner.

"However, the privatised system lacks reporting and monitoring mechanisms of the roles and actions of the Non-Government Organisations (NGOs) and children placed in their care."

"When FACS was responsible for Out of Home Care it could rigorously monitor the carers, the children and manage the outcomes."

"However, because of the lack of accountability of the NGOs, "events" involving children are not heard of until it is too late".

In November 2015, the Auditor General reported his concern at the significant rise of the money going to the NGOs (now over one-third of the total FACS expenditure) and their lack of accountability.

"The NGOs are heavily dependent on this funding without being directly accountable to the NSW Government on how these funds are spent. The current process is based upon service providers self-assessing performance," said Steve Turner.

"In other Australian jurisdictions, Auditor Generals have the power to scrutinise NGOs performance on service levels and how they spend tax payer dollars."

"That is why the PSA, as part of its Stop The Secret Sell Off campaign, is calling on the Baird Government to give the Auditor General these powers to 'follow the money'" said Steve Turner.

stopthesecretselloff.com.au