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Mr Michael Coutts-Trotter
Secretary
Family and Community Services
Locked Bag 10
Strawberry Hills NSW 2012

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Dear Mr Coutts-Trotter

Over the last year I have visited many Community Services offices around the State. I am shocked by the high level of stress and anxiety in all the offices I visited. It would appear that offices are affected by vacancies arising from people off on work related stress, increasing work demands and an absence of regular and quality individual supervision.

The effect on staff arises from many factors; vacancy rates, changes to work arrangements and the inability to address the needs of children at risk in the State.

Staff being made to house children in motels and often in their offices is one such bad working practice forced upon your staff.

The Association has directed our members to use workload planners so that they may work with their Managers to agree on planned casework tasks within contract hours over a 4-week cycle. This results in an agreed workload plan containing planned casework tasks as well as safe and manageable workloads. Not all Managers are accepting this tool, nor the important role of individual professional supervision. Until FACS can come up with a better tool that we could agree on, I would ask that this tool be endorsed by senior management who can cooperate in implementing this in the context of regular and quality individual supervision.

Recent surveys conducted by the Association note that many, if not a majority of staff in Community Service work excessive hours, a significant proportion being unpaid. Workload planners allow for effective casework planning, as well as ensuring staff are not allocated excessive workloads resulting in them working excessive and unsafe hours.

Many of the issues we have covered in our 'Submission to the Inquiry into Child Protection' (LCGPSC No.2).

I write to request a meeting to discuss these issues. The PSA seeks to ensure the safety and security of staff working in FACS so that they may effectively carry out their jobs in looking after the children coming to the attention of FACS.

Yours faithfully


STEVE TURNER
ASSISTANT GENERAL SECRETARY

27 July 2016