

Community Services Casework overload

PSA fights excessive caseloads

Following a recent meeting with FACS Secretary, Michael Coutts-Trotter, where we raised concerns about low staff morale and excessive caseloads in Community Services, the PSA has now written to him calling for an audit of caseworker caseloads statewide. Read that letter [HERE](#).

<http://psa asn au/wp-content/uploads/2016/12/Ltr-insert-bulletin-Re-Casework-overload.pdf>

Recent PSA surveys of caseworkers across districts, unsurprisingly, found the majority of respondents work unpaid overtime (forfeiting hours) in order to meet arbitrary targets.

The current Upper House enquiry into child protection the committee noted that over the past four years there has been a 40 percent increase in the face-to-face response to Risk of Serious Harm. Yet there has been no increase in caseworker numbers. This, coupled with the spiralling numbers of children in OOHC, does not lead to better outcomes as caseworkers are overstretched and under enormous strain.

Casework managers have told your union they are being forced to allocate excessive

caseloads. This is resulting from Head Office placing arbitrary performance targets on districts to "increase productivity".

Despite the NSW Auditor General repeatedly highlighting the fact that Community Services caseworkers have excessively high caseloads compared to NGO caseworkers, FACS has failed to reduce caseloads to levels recommended by the Wood Enquiry in 2008.

Your union believes the chronic under-resourcing of Community Services has created an unsafe working environment. This is evidenced by excessive caseloads, a high level of workers' compensation claims, a high number of employee grievances and bullying complaints, the high level of sick leave and caseworker turnover.

The PSA is concerned FACS may be failing in its duty of care and legal obligations under WHS legislation to provide a safe working environment for its employees.

Your union will continue to fight for a sustainable workload for all casework staff to enable you to provide quality casework to the States most vulnerable children.

