

3 November 2017

Hunter New England District OOHC accreditation

PSA members in the Hunter New England District are deeply concerned about the advice from the Office of the Children's Guardian that their district has not met Out of Home Care (OOHC) accreditation status. The district has been given another six months to meet the standards.

Members advised the PSA they worked hard to ensure their district met the standards but encountered many difficulties due to a number of issues including:

- » lack of action to fill vacancies
- » unrelentingly high caseloads
- » lack of support and resources on the ground
- » training for ChildStory
- » continuing pressure to change systems and processes within FACS.

Caseworkers and all other staff involved in accreditation have been pushed to the limits. Indeed, far too many have sacrificed their own time trying to meet what are unmanageable work demands. It is crystal clear the district is under-resourced. Yet, not one word of recognition or appreciation has been offered by FACS. Staff have simply been told that they "will need to work harder".

The PSA has written to FACS Secretary Michael Coutts-Trotter about this priority matter. We are calling on him to act immediately to fill vacant positions and provide additional and ongoing resources so that the district and its staff can meet and sustain the standards.

We have reiterated to the Secretary our members are hardworking, loyal and committed and have done everything that has been asked of them. We've also made clear that what is required is strong and effective leadership by FACS to support staff in what will be a challenging six months to meet the standards. Read the PSA's letter [HERE](#).

Your union is here to support you through this difficult time and will be visiting Community Services Centres in Hunter New England. In the meantime you may wish to contact:

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