

## Don't pull the plug on KIDS

As you are aware, the Department is intending to turn KIDS off on 1 April 2020. Whilst there will still be very limited access to specific roles, those in frontline child protection will have none.

The PSA has advocated tirelessly at every level of the department and government for child protection workers to have the tools to do your work effectively, including maintaining KIDS in read only version. Despite this, Minister Ward does not believe your continued access to KIDS is necessary. Minister Ward and DCJ Executive have chosen to ignore child protection practitioners' wishes and have made a decision that will make it more difficult for you to do your work. A decision that will inevitably place children at risk.

PSA Delegates have demonstrated to the department that not all records migrated from KIDS are visible in ChildStory and that without access to KIDS, the time taken to do certain child protection work will take significantly longer. Very often Caseworkers need quick access to crucial historical information. Child protection workers will be forced to spend more time tied to their computers as opposed to working directly with children and their families. You made this very clear in your responses to surveys undertaken by the PSA, the results of which were shared with Minister Ward. It is unacceptable the decision makers, who don't rely on ChildStory and KIDS to do their day-to-day work, have arbitrarily decided to take away a tool which greatly assists you do your work – keeping children safe.

On 17 February 2020, the PSA again raised these concerns in letters to The Honourable Garth Ward MP, NSW Minister for Families, Communities and Disability Services, The Honourable Penny Sharp MP, Shadow Minister for Family, Communities and Disability Services, The NSW Children's Guardian Janet Schorer PSM, Co-opted Councillor for the NSW Institute of Public Administration Australia Margaret Crawford and NSW Ombudsman Michael Barnes. See the letter to Minister Ward [HERE](#).

In the letters, we clearly highlighted the risks and consequences of turning off KIDS. The PSA has asked that KIDS remain active as a read-only asset and tool for child protection workers, as it allows easy and ready access to some 30 years of electronic records relating to around one million children and adults.

The Department has stated that the cost to maintain read-only access to KIDS is not part of its decision to shut it down and that the decision has been made by the Minister. This raises the obvious questions as to why it is will be shut down and for whose benefit. Certainly not yours.

The PSA continues to state that KIDS is a long-standing, well-used and resourced tool for frontline child protection workers. An arbitrary decision to turn it off completely will only put the safety and lives of children at an unnecessary risk.

The NSW State Government has an obligation to do everything in its power to protect those who are most vulnerable. Ironically KIDS will still remain and parts of the NSW State Government will continue to have access, why not those who need it most?

