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23 March 2017

Cathy Taylor
Chief Executive
Department for Child Protection
GPO Box 1152
Adelaide SA 5001

Dear Ms Taylor

Re: Nyland Royal Commission – Ongoing and Genuine Consultation

The Public Service Association (PSA) writes formally to request a written response regarding your commitment to ongoing and meaningful consultation with the employees of the Department of Child Protection (DCP) on potential changes arising from the Nyland Royal Commission recommendations.

To date DCP has been dragged kicking and screaming to fulfil their requirement for consultation regarding psychological assessments to residential care workers, a matter that resulted in recommendations from the South Australian Industrial Relations Commission for DCP to consult. This was also after a previous undertaking from the Department not to introduce psychological assessment on existing employees. DCP's approach has angered PSA members and severely damaged an already tense industrial relationship.

The actions of DCP as evidenced by the psychological assessment dispute, has resulted in real concerns that DCP will consult on matters only when reminded by the PSA. The PSA is seeking immediate assurances that the debacle surrounding psychological assessments will not occur again.

Following the departmental restructure and birth of DCP, and with the establishment of the Child Protection Reform Team, the PSA is seeking confirmation of a more structured approach to consultation within DCP that will predominantly flow on from the progressive implementation of the Nyland recommendations.

An example where a more structured approach to change is needed is the Child and Family Assessment Referral Networks (CFARNs). This is a current and urgent matter that requires significant consultation due to potential changes to the service delivery, structure, and pathways of notifications for child protection matters. Historically a false economy was established by continuing to operate the Child Abuse Report Line (CARL) call centre with more than 10 FTE staff vacancies (APH classification) from the structure. This ongoing high level of vacancies resulted in the highly public denigration of this service. These vacant positions subsequently disappeared in the previously disputed 'harvesting' process.


The PSA seek a preliminary view on how many additional FTE to front line child protection are to be recruited to the CFARN worksites. Thereafter there is the expectation that meaningful consultation must be established regarding changes to this service.

In addition to the above the PSA also seeks immediate confirmation of DCP's intent regarding the previous 'commitment to staffing an 50 additional staff up to 30 June 2017'. Of real concern to PSA members is that after 18 months there is still no outcomes on the long term future of additional staffing. The loss of crucial front-line child protection positions remains the number one priority for PSA members as the simplest and most effective way to address the systemic failings DCP inherited.

The PSA remains concerned that despite initial positive displays when you undertook the role of CE within DCP, your recent actions are highlighting to our members that in reality nothing has changed. Consequently the PSA is seeking urgent commitments that DCP will consult on child protection reform and will do so in a structured manner and request DCP provide initial thoughts as to how the Department intends to fulfil the industrial obligations. Furthermore specific responses to the CFARN and FTE questions raised within this correspondence are expected at the same time.

Please provide your written response by close of business Friday 31 March 2017. Your response and position will be discussed with all child protection members. For further discussion please contact PSA Industrial Officer Jason Newell at jason.newell@cpsu.asn.au or on 8205 3238.

Yours sincerely,



Nev Kitchin
General Secretary