



MEDIA RELEASE

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Tweed caseworkers walk out over understaffing, lack of resources

Staff at the Department of Community Services office in Tweed have walked out this morning in protest at chronic staff shortages and a lack of adequate resources, according to the Public Service Association of NSW.

Public Service Association of NSW, Assistant Secretary, Steve Turner, said caseworker vacancies were running as high as 40 per cent in some areas of NSW.

“NSW’s most vulnerable children and families are placed in extreme danger by budget cuts, understaffing and the overburdening of community services staff,” he said today.

“We still have vacancy rates running as high as 40 per cent in some areas across the state, and budget cuts are set to hit each and every office.

“Staff find themselves overwhelmed by high levels of administrative red-tape and chronic staff shortages that stop them from essential face-to-face work with vulnerable children and their families.

“That’s how we’ve reached the untenable stage where only one-in-ten children reported to Community Services receive face-to-face visits from caseworkers. Budget cuts will only exasperate the crisis.

“The Auditor General has already warned it’s an unmanageable situation, with terrible risks for vulnerable children.

“Minister Pru Goward must confront the reality that NSW can’t do child protection on the cheap, we need more staff and resources, not budget cuts.

“Community Services must be properly resourced, staffed and funded to provide high-quality care and support to children at risk in our community,” he said.

A skeleton staff remained on duty during the meeting and walk out to respond to emergencies.

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