



**The Hon Gareth Ward MP**  
Minister for Families and Communities  
Minister for Disability Services

EAP19/3821

Steve Kinmond  
CEO Association of Children's Welfare Agencies  
Level 4, 699 George St  
Sydney NSW 2000

Dear Mr Kinmond,

Thank you for hosting the meeting with your members on the 13<sup>th</sup> May. I found the meeting very useful, informing me of the great work going on in the NGO sector and some of the issues your members are facing.

I have read the minutes and have had time to further consider some of the issues. I would like to take this opportunity to respond further to some of the questions and comments posed on the day. Additional detailed comments are provided in the attached table.

With regard to the need for increased early intervention services for children and families experiencing domestic violence, you may be aware that Their Futures Matter is delivering Functional Family Therapy through Child Welfare (FFT-CW) and Multisystemic Therapy for Child Abuse and Neglect (MST-CAN). These programs are evidence-based intensive family preservation models aimed at keeping families together. The relevant FACS district should be able to assist with identifying potential for referrals.

I share your concern with regard to young women in OOHC falling pregnant. Their Futures Matters data has also identified this as an issue. FACS funds and/or delivers a number of dedicated programs in NSW to support young parents such as the Red Cross Young Parents Program and Launchpad Youth and Community. FACS is also recruiting carers to support mother and baby placements.

There is more work needed in the area of young parents and especially young parents in OOHC and Their Futures Matter continues to work on this.

A number of participants mentioned the need to better support Aboriginal children and children from culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) communities. FACS is committed to addressing the over representation of Aboriginal children in the child protection and out-of-home care systems. To achieve this, FACS is working very closely with the NSW Child, Family and Community Peak Aboriginal Corporation (AbSec) to achieve growth in the Aboriginal child and family sector.

To better support the needs of children with CALD backgrounds, policies are being strengthened to include a focus on the importance of cultural awareness, particularly when placing children in out-of-home care.

I appreciate the importance of timely payments by FACS to the sector. FACS acknowledges that there have been historical issues with payments being made on time. Initiatives are in place, such as monthly contract management meetings with funded service providers, to discuss concerns and escalate matters where needed. ChildStory functionality is also being improved to better support data quality and funding.

FACS is committed to working collaboratively with funded service providers, particularly in relation to the delivery of the Permanency Support Program (PSP). The success of the program and, in turn, improved outcomes for children and young people is dependent on a shared vision and strong partnership.

I have raised the matter of Temporary Care Arrangements with the Department and they have advised that a Practice Minute has been drafted to clarify how FACS and funded service providers work together and the funding arrangement. It is anticipated this practice minute will be published in July 2019.

FACS acknowledges there is still more work to be done to ensure that NDIS plans meet the needs of participants. I, along with my colleagues, am working closely with the Federal government and the National Disability Insurance Agency (NDIA) via the COAG Disability Reform Council and working groups to improve support provision and address any potential duplication.

I look forward to working closely with you and the non-government sector more broadly on improving outcomes for children and young people in NSW.

If you would like more information on any of the initiatives I have described, please do not hesitate to contact Michelle Smith, Director Implementation and Performance, on 8753 8486 or at [michelle.smith@facs.nsw.gov.au](mailto:michelle.smith@facs.nsw.gov.au).

Yours sincerely,



**THE HON GARETH WARD MP**  
Minister for Families and Communities  
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3-6-19