

Submission to the Select Committee on Child Protection by the CPSU (SPSFT) Inc.

This submission is made on behalf of members of the Community & Public Sector Union (State Public Services Federation Tasmania) Inc. who work across the whole Tasmanian Public Sector but particularly those with responsibility for the protection of our children such as Disability, Child, Youth and Family Service; Youth Justice; The Department of Education and the Department of Police and Emergency Services.

Background

There seems to be a perception in the general public that the problems arising in Tasmania's system of child protection are systemic and therefore the solutions involve changes to the current systems.

The CPSU is not convinced this is the answer. For much of the past 10 years the CPSU has been raising a whole range of concerns with the Government concerning Child Protection but the common element in all of them is the adequacy of the resources provided to this critical area. We acknowledge that in response to the issues we have raised and the campaigns we have run the Government has added additional resources but new resources have never been sufficient to deal with the backlog of issues and the growing demand for services.

It makes no sense to under resource a system so that it fails and to then say the system itself needs to be reviewed. We content that many of the failings within the Child Protection system have arisen as a result of a lack of resources.

Areas of Concern

1. There is no transparent system in place to ensure the caseload allocated to a Child Protection worker is reasonable. Workers who are allocated more cases than they can properly manage are forced to 'crisis' manage them. Many workers spend a significant proportion of their time dealing with urgent situations that arise rather than being able to plan and review their cases. This often means finding solutions is more complex because intervention has come later than preferred and therefore more time consuming.

Recently some managers have tried to address the crisis management approach by requiring case management plans to be completed within a set timeframe. When caseloads are excessive, all this does to focus overloaded workers on completing paperwork instead of dealing with children and their issues. There has been an increase in the administrative duties required by Child Protection Workers and implementation of new systems, which have also increased the time taken to complete such tasks. This all has the potential to place more children at risk.

This problem is exacerbated by the very limited options open to workers when they need to intervene. Over the past decade there has been a reduction in the availability of foster care and other out of home options. In some situations workers spend days trying to find a suitable placement for a child and this is time that is not available for them to manage their other caseload.

Excessive caseloads also have significant detrimental effects on workers. CPSU staff have regularly witnessed Child Protection members literally in tears because they are working flat out but still have cases they know they should be following up. We have taken calls from members who report being unable to sleep at night because despite working a 12 hour day they went home knowing there were cases they had not been able to work on.

At one stage this excessive workload was reported as the unallocated list but when the political imperative came to end the unallocated list, all the cases were allocated and excessive caseloads became unbearable.

2. Team leaders in Child Protection should be available to assist workers with peaks and troughs in their caseloads, to provide relief and backup for cases when workers are on leave or resign and to provide professional support and guidance to their team. Child Protection is blessed with many highly skilled and experienced team leaders who try to do all these things but they are hampered by the fact that they are also allocated caseloads – often carrying the highest and most complex cases. Given the stressful environment in which these workers operate it is essential team leaders have the time to monitor and support their team rather than being consumed by their own caseload responsibilities.
3. Low worker morale, excessive workloads and constant change has made Child Protection in Tasmania an unattractive place to work. Many experienced workers have left the system because they have found it far too stressful. This situation has created a feedback loop where high numbers of vacancies and continual turnover of staff negatively impacts on morale and so more staff choose to leave and fewer people are encouraged to join.
4. It is not only in Child Protection that services to children at risk are being under resourced. At present the Department of Education employs a total of 45 (FTE) school social workers to deliver services to approximately 65000 students enrolled in our state schools – a ratio of around 1 school social worker for every 1500 children. School social workers report that a vast majority of their time is spent dealing with crisis situations involving individuals or small groups and therefore rarely have the opportunity to be proactive. These workers are the frontline where early intervention and prevention strategies would have the most impact but they simply do not have the time to do this work.

In Youth Justice we recently had the situation where there were only 5 Youth Justice workers responsible for managing all cases in the south of the state. Again these workers reported that rather than being able to work with children to keep them out of our justice system they were

wholly absorbed supervising court orders and responding to crisis situations. It is little wonder such a high proportion of children known to the criminal justice system go on to careers in this area.

Recommendations

1. That caseload management tools be developed for Child Protection workers, School Social workers and Youth Justice workers. The tools need to be flexible enough to assess the complexity of cases so that workers are allocated a mixture of cases that together equate to a manageable workload. Where demand for services increases in excess of the capacity of existing workers then additional workers will need to be employed.
2. Team leaders should have no caseload allocated to them. They should work with their team to ensure all the cases allocated to the team are properly managed.

Detailed Member Responses.

Terms of Reference

a) Early identification, intervention and prevention strategies currently in place within all relevant agencies including the DHHS (including Family Support and Child Protection Service), the Office of the Commissioner for Children, DoE, DoJ, Tasmania Police, and the non-government sector including Gateway service providers, and including comparison with child protection regimes in other Australian jurisdictions.

- Given the changes in recent times, and also the extensive coverage of this issue in the media, there is certainly more community awareness of the child protection issue. Within CPS I note the following which seem to impact on the speed of intervention:
 - Difficulty being able to contact and get information from sources to conduct assessments. This is particularly so when the organization requires extensive paperwork or procedures to lodge a request, or when staff are frequently off duty for some time and no other members are aware of a case.
 - Continued difficulty working with Gateway including complex, time consuming referral processes and continual referral back to child protection “just to check if it’s ok”. Gateway are also now telling people that they will not take self-referrals if the person has been speaking with CPS (even at intake). This then means the family must be referred by CPS meaning a greater delay in Gateway getting, processing and acting on the referral.
 - While there seems to be generally a good identification of concerns by community/organisations, there is a frequent and ongoing attitudes from professionals that it’s “not their job” to intervene with a family where lower level issues are present. There seems to be an ongoing perception by some that any risk issue identified must be

handled by child protection which leads to a lack of willingness for them to provide basic community interventions in cases where CPS would not be intervening. This being said, there are an increasing number of organisations who are taking a proactive and collaborative approach and these people are making a great difference.

- Notifications and enquiries come through Intake which prompts information gathering to assess risk consists of checks with (but not exclusively) schools, police, and social workers, where appropriate family and relatives, hospital, medical professionals and child health nurses.
- If the evidence suggests a child is at risk then discussions are held with the Team Leader Intake who will discuss with Team Leader Response (or Investigation).
- If an immediate risk issue is identified (such as bruising or neglect) there are three options: P1 – a CPS response within ½ day; P2 – a CPS response within 5 days; P3 – a CPS response within 10days.
- Where it is identified a family requires support as opposed to more formal CPS interventions, such as a Care and Protection Order, a referral can be made to Gateway. This occurs, for example, when the parent(s) are assessed as providing a level of care which needs to be enhanced with parenting support to better able to manage their own needs and that of their children.
- If a young person is subject to an intervention by Youth Justice information sharing occurs but in many cases it is difficult to engage the client because of their age, social functioning (e.g. peer pressure), substance abuse, the levels of criminal activity, lack of parenting support and typically demonstrating the Involuntary Client interaction.
- Other jurisdictions appear to be fragmented just as much as the Tasmanian model. For example, numerous high profile child protection concerns are raised in Victoria, NSW and Northern Territory not excluding Western Australia and Queensland. Anecdotal evidence from ex workers and the media suggest a system in crisis. This crisis is evidenced by high levels of staff turnover and stress leave.
- Child Protection, because of its profile, is often embroiled in managing the political environment as opposed to the protective environment.
- Numerous restructures and lack of resources coupled with the demands placed on workers with high case loads and lack of recognition towards workers place inordinate stress and strain on the individual, child and work output.
- One of the very important issues never addressed is the simple fact that there is a constant change in staff in CPS – retaining and valuing experienced and high quality staff is paramount in

ensuring the goals of any organization.

- Ensure that mandated reporters fully understand their responsibilities in reporting concerns.
- Prepare a simple process map showing how the various organizations are linked and then perhaps any 'holes' in the process might be identified and thereby addressed.
- Ensure that Gateways workers are fully trained and that they understand the CPS system and to understand the links.
- Improve physical working conditions for employees to make this a more attractive workplace – poor facilities for those who currently work in a high stress high workload environment
- Create a better CPS image – Woodhouse reception area simply says to clients that – CPS does not value them and that this is the standard they deserve
- Management should be seen to communicate with workers 'on the ground' to better understand their concerns
- Look to O/S CP systems and processes – are we complying with world's best practice?
- There are more child protection workers now than in the past but more are needed. Many NGOs are reluctant to work with the difficult clients and want CPS to manage them.
- Notifications made to Child Protection are not always followed up in a timely manner.
- There are occasions when schools (particularly rural/remote area) are left in very difficult circumstances because a child or young person has made a disclosure which necessitates immediate response but CP are unable to provide the response by the close of the school day. This leaves school staff in the position of having to explain to parents why a student has not caught a bus home or been allowed to leave the school. Young person will then need to be left in the care of staff member until such time as a CP worker can be dispatched. In the past this has meant transporting the young person to the nearest Police station and waiting with them until late into the evening when CP worker eventually arrives. There needs to be greater consideration of the needs of rural/remote school staff around issues to do with confidentiality in these circumstances as there is no hiding the fact that the notification has come from the school and in the past this has placed school staff in a vulnerable position – threats, aggression etc.
- It is current practice for CP workers to ask school staff whether they themselves feel comfortable speaking with a parent about an allegation of abuse/neglect. This is not the role of

school staff – it places staff at risk and places children at risk because school staff are not in a position to be able to ensure the safety of a child in these circumstances.

b) Mechanisms currently in place, and where improvements can be made to enhance the integration between all relevant agencies to ensure that the welfare of any identified child at risk is paramount and that all agencies work together to provide best practice care and service delivery.

- This is very, very slow in developing. We have a number of MOU's with organisations, however information sharing is very slow due to cumbersome processes. Some agencies are still very guarded and some refuse to provide information to CPS.
- There is also a very non-integrated approach to service delivery with multiple services providing specialist interventions which are limited and if the circumstances change, these services disengage and tell the family to seek support from another organization. For example, a family with a frequently running away child may engage with good beginnings while the child is at home to get support around parenting and the parent/child relationship, but if the child runs away they are told to go to Reconnect. Then if the child returns, Reconnect advises engagement with another service to work on their relationship in the home.
- The local Inter-Agency Support Teams (IAST) program operated by the Police should be reviewed with the view of using the 'learnings' to expand this program towards better integration of service delivery.
- The Child Protection service has just implemented the new Child Protection Information system which was purpose built for the service. Note: system development takes time to develop; implement and needs to be nurtured in order for it to be sustained.
- The web-based system supports integration with other 'modern' systems. We need further funding to support getting our other systems to same state, including a replacement for YJIS (Youth Justice Information System).
- School Social Workers – Youth Shelters – Gateway – keep referring to Child Protection to work with parents over arguments, a slap across the face etc. I realise that they need to make a notification however none of these services are prepared to work with the parent **and** child in order to help the peace process. The child wants to leave home and the services want CP to take them. The unrealistic expectations are forcing CP to triple the workload – especially at the intake level.
- The other service that was formed to assist with services to clients also keeps referring the children back to Intake if the family are too difficult to work with. On the other side of the coin they do not let child protection know about cases that have disengaged from their service when CP refers to them. Thus clients who are in desperate need of the service are falling through the

cracks.

- Intake workers are required to meet KPI's that on the face of it are there to ensure notifications are dealt with in a timely manner.
 - KPI's fail to acknowledge that the information gathering process is reliant on timely feedback from stakeholders who are not constrained by a KPI expectation;
 - notifications keep coming in adding to the already overload of those being dealt with;
 - staff are often overworked when staffing resources are not available;
 - positive management feedback and an acknowledgement of lack of resources rather than an over emphasis on meeting KPI's regardless of the work environment will assist staff in a difficult working environment.
- Work can be dictated by the type of notification being dealt with. If a case is assessed as a priority then it must be written up as soon as possible. This does not mean that notifications or phone calls stop coming in!
- If a worker is online and one of two in the program area then phone calls still have to be dealt with. It is not so bad if there are other staff that can help out, but this is not always possible.
- Gateway is a voluntary service which means a family does not have to engage if they don't want to.
- When Gateway was first established Child Protection Workers were assured that clients presenting with child protection issues, but not at the higher formal intervention stage, would be told that engagement with Gateway would be an expectation not necessarily a choice.
- What actually occurs is that if a family declines to engage they are referred back to Child Protection who are then expected to deal with the presenting problems that were referred to Gateway in the first place. In effect it becomes a cycle of who is expected to do what.
- Integration suggestions:
 - Gateway guidelines be reviewed to ensure that referrals by Child Protection are dealt with on the basis that families are referred because the presenting issues require an intervention based on the needs of the children. This will mean that Gateway will engage despite parents not wanting to and services are provided in the interests of the

care and protection of the most vulnerable.

- Additional or better directed funding can be provided into enhancing secondary interventions which will help alleviate recurring notifications to Child Protection.
 - Better liaison with services such as police and schools. These are probably – but not exclusively – the most important and frequently used contacts in CPS. In some, if not all, jurisdictions in England and in NSW, police have a special unit that work with CPS.
 - Better education for school teachers and school support staff. Some schools do not notify until days or sometimes weeks after an incident is first noticed.
 - Some school social workers don't fully understand what Child Protection can realistically do when a notification is made. Notifications are sometimes made that can better avoid the formal system by the community resources providing support to a family.
 - There are some services that want CPS to 'wave a stick' at families believing this is the scare that is needed to jolt people into a more appropriate parenting response (but saying at the same time that a legal intervention is not necessary).
 - There are occasions when CPS is told that now that a notification has been made it absolves the notifier who says they have done their mandatory reporting and prefer to be no longer involved.
 - At times it is very difficult obtaining information from services that are reluctant to pass on information because of a perceived conflict with confidentiality and privacy.
 - What to do: Seeking information from people who have worked in other jurisdictions (there are some in Tasmanian CPS) and to try and integrate that experience to see what works well and can be utilised here. Often however it is the political environment both internal and external that gets in the way.
- Widen case management teams with adequate resources.
 - Teams should include representatives from various agencies all whom have been tasked with their individual organisation's responsibilities.
 - Case conferencing occurs from time to time. Unfortunately many services do not understand the limitations CPS experience and often have expectations CPS will fix it.

- There is a lack of communication between CP and school at a number of different levels. Most concerning is the lack of communication from CP about children under the care of the department. I have recently had children who were put on care and protection orders which included prohibition of contact with a family member and yet the school was not notified and received no copies of the orders.
- For every child who is in the care of the Department there needs to be some communication with the school social worker/relevant school staff. Schools are in a position to monitor the progress of young people – there needs to be greater collaboration between CP case workers and school social workers for there to be good practice in case management.

c) review the Children, Young Persons and Their Families Act 1997, including all proposed amendments to the Act as mentioned in the Tasmanian Government's response to recommendations in the Commissioner for Children's report on his inquiry into the circumstances of a 12 year old child under guardianship of the Secretary, October 2010

- I worked as a CPW in the days when we still had the old Child Protection board which included on the board the chief prosecutor and education department reps. Whilst I am not advocating bringing back the board; I think that the Department should utilise the provision of Advisory Panels in the Act to provide advice on all care and protection order applications that are being considered by the Child Protection service (replace the Court Advisory Action Group which is currently internal).
- The Advisory Panel could be made up of key representatives from Justice; Education; Police (prosecution); and Gateway. The panel reps should be at a level of authority where they can require of their own departments information about clients and require their own departments to take certain actions following the outcome decisions of a panel discussion. The panel would also need the authority to be able to 'require' other professionals to attend panel meetings to provide advice on matters before the panel.
- This would provide a much better level of protection for our Child Protection workers/service and also support the new paradigm that Child Protection is Everyone's business.
- The CYP&F Act 1997 can be viewed as very prescriptive and in some cases this is needed. However one area where it can be strengthened is similar to that applied in some jurisdictions in England. That is it should be mandated that children who are subject to a legal intervention should be part of a broader community consultative process where independent professional and appropriate people advise and recommend outcomes.
- This should also apply to cases at Intake level where an independent group considers the more difficult or contentious issues concerning a client. The group should be made on a rotation basis so that different and more contemporary outcomes are considered. Currently discussions can be

held in house and sometimes outcomes are based on personality politics.

- The medical profession is sometimes the most reluctant to make notifications either not being aware of their responsibility or thinking it will compromise confidentiality. Much more education is required to keep medical professionals and indeed other sections of the community more fully informed of current CPS practices.
- Whilst not being familiar with many of the Children's Commissioners report recommendations but I have heard that many of them are not possible with current resources and practices – this is something that needs to be addressed at a much higher level. i.e. no increase in resources will only place more pressure and stress on workers and result in even more workers leaving.
- Some of the Commissioner's recommendations were of no use. Unfortunately families and children can pull the wool over the eyes of even the most experienced worker.
- Key is to have staff that know what to look for and Team Leaders that ensure staff are on track.

d) Other long term contributors to child abuse and neglect, such as poverty, drug and alcohol misuse and mental health issues

- Unfortunately, treatment services for young people with drug and alcohol and mental health problems (esp inpatient) are severely lacking in Tasmania. This means there is an extended period where long term neurological changes can occur to the next generation of parents.
- I have seen time and time again the effects of poverty and poor living situations on the stress in families which is often provided with only bandaid solutions and which escalates until the point CPS are required. In my opinion, many of the cases CPS intervene in are the result of underfunding and lack of resourcing to services designed to address these early intervention cases. For example:
 - Housing and family support services are under resourced = CPS need to house runaway/unsupervised/neglected children;
 - Family Law Court are unable to meet demand on their system = Child Protection takes multiple notifications from upset parents (on lawyers' say so);
 - Schools are unwilling/unable to pursue legal avenues to prosecute parents whose children are absentee = Child Protection are called to be a 'big stick'.
 - Services designed to help parents cope with runaway teens are overstretched = Child protection are called

- Police/courts/treatment services are unable to adequately address family violence offenders = child protection gets called to rescue the children (and thereby gets blamed for apparently blaming the mother who is the carer of the children and therefore the parent who is worked with)
 - Disability services can't provide enough respite for stressed families = Child protection has to find placements for children given up by their burnt out parents.
- I am not saying that this is all everyone else's fault. What I'm saying is that while CPS tends to end up the focus (and the assumption is that it is solely child protection's job to protect all Tasmanian children), my perspective is that the state of CPS tends to reflect the state of supporting services and the general state of the community – when other organisations are struggling, it will all flow downhill to CPS.
 - Sustained focus on adult government services such as Mental Health services and Alcohol and Drug services providing a more family sensitive service delivery approach. Such as extending the Children of Parents with a Mental Illness (COPMI) resource program out to all government adult service provision.
 - Substance misuse and abuse, poverty and mental health are usually but not exclusively behind many of the issues presented to CPS. Often it is a generational problem with attempts to try and break the pattern very difficult. Overwhelmingly many notifications are received from police (especially) about family violence that impacts on the children. Many notifications concern poor anger management control, high levels of substance abuse, mental health and risk to children. Mental health can be problematic when dealing with abuse because of the mood swings, lack of medication regimes or no medical interventions at all.
 - In addition most notifications received by CPS concern families from marginalised or stereotypical sections of the community. This is not to suggest CPS matters are only relevant to these groupings, but that other areas and more educated groups may hide what goes on at home.
 - Drug abuse is a huge issue and is not acknowledged at any level. Most people in the wider community would be shocked to know how bad the drug abuse problem is. Alcohol is a recognized problem and is more likely to be discussed in general terms.
 - Over the past few years drug/alcohol and mental health along with family violence have become common factors in notifications. Cases are more complex and the added complexities require staff to have good skills.

e) the appropriateness, and need for, any further inquiry including but not limited to a Commission of Inquiry as established under the Commissions of Inquiry Act 1995

- An inquiry will just tell us, expensively, what we already know.
- Not required if this inquiry is able to influence government direction and funding.
- I believe that there have been numerous enquiries and restructures over many years and staff are just worn out with restructure and enquiry overload. It should not be difficult for the political process to determine what is best for vulnerable children – there are numerous places where success is quoted (e.g. the New Zealand Child Protection system). The reality is though that the political process will always determine an outcome – e.g. the recent Children’s Commissioner result. What workers have been told is that if more funding is provided to CPS it is likely that another level of management will be introduced to oversee staff practice and auditing of cases.
- I do not feel we need enquiries, we should be spending the money on staff training.

f) other matters incidental thereto

- The CPS system is at extreme risk in my opinion of an implosion. The morale in this department is at breaking point and the environment is all but designed to produce burnout. Out of the people working in my unit, none of them want to be there for much longer, a third are just holding on until they can leave the department, one has only just arrived and is shocked at the state of the workplace, another is at the point of a nervous breakdown and in tears almost once per week, and others are desperately wanting to go to another part of the department and some have decided never to attempt to be in a management role because to the problems that entails. It’s almost a weekly occurrence for a farewell e-mail to be sent to the service centre
- All of us feel unlistened to by management, not valued for the skills we are being paid for, feel directed to do things that make no sense on the ground, not involved in decisions and policy that concerns us (such as the design of the new CPIS-2 which has caused endless problems) and generally being asked to do the impossible - cover every angle of a notification in a timeframe that is not doable given internal policy, and then being hauled across the coals for being unable to do it. There are people backfilling for backfilled positions, doing two jobs just so they are filled and no planning for jobs to be filled when known upcoming resignations.
- Useful Reading for members of the Inquiry:

- First edition, History of child protection services, by Alister Lamont and Leah Bromfield, published October 2010
 - The Munro Review of Child Protection, Part One: A Systems Analysis, by Professor Eileen Munro, United Kingdom, 30 September 2010
 - Protecting Children is Everyone's Business, National Framework for Protecting Australia's Children 2009-2020, Commonwealth of Australia 2009
 - New Directions for Child Protection in Tasmania - An Integrated Strategic Framework: DHHS Jan 2008
 - New Directions for Children in Tasmania - Action Plan for Children in Care: June 2008
 - Report on Child Protection Services in Tasmania , DHHS Oct 2006
 - A Way Forward, Implementation of actions in response to the Review of Child Protection Services in Tasmania. DHHS Nov 2006
- Child Protection recently introduced a new Child Protection Information System or CPIS 2. This was developed to provide a more comprehensive tool to record all activity from the time a notification is made through to Response to Case Management and Out of Home Care to discharge of an Order including carer payments.
 - The previous CPIS1 model provided only for Intake and Response activities following which case management tasks were entered on a Word Document.
 - Rather than enhancing CPIS1 a totally new system was introduced which has resulted longer times for entering data, more mouse 'click' processes, more edit and save functions, higher levels of frustration when opening screens (time factors – it can take up to a minute to open some screens) – and a more complex process of accessing previous information because of where it is located.
 - Little worker level input was sought in the development of this system, which by and large has caused significant work load increase, the risk of OH&S issues e.g. RSI and eyestrain and high levels of stress. Workers have addressed these concerns with relevant program management and some effort is being made to deal with the more obvious short comings. However the Department, it seems, was prepared to implement a system that is faulty from its inception and now attempts piecemeal efforts to fix it. The result is that some issues will probably never be addressed or treated as a low priority because there is no funding to fix what we have to work with now.

- Staff morale: CPW's generally have a case load of 20 children – some more some less depending on the complexity. This may sound like a reasonable expectation but deeper analysis will reveal that working with children means engaging with parent(s), grandparents, extended family, social workers, and counsellors and so on. In effect the bureaucratic expectations and requirements result in higher demands for outcomes and increased work load stress for staff who have been told that if a care plan is not completed then no funding will be provided for that child.
- Whilst it is easy to be critical of management (I have been in management myself), criticism in itself is not necessarily wrong. Workers have to constantly adjust their work load priorities whenever new structures are implemented. Very little encouragement is given to staff who are told to do more with less or given timelines that do not take into account the overall working environment –punitive and authoritarian style of management – for example if care plans aren't completed on time then funding will not be provided (for that child).
- Recently Child Protection Workers were encouraged to read *The Munro Review of Child Protection* by Professor Eileen Munro from England. On the Signs of Safety website <http://www.signsofsafety.net/> is the following review “Things are changing in England! Professor Eileen Munro has released part one of her review of English child protection practice. This is a highly intelligent and straightforward document seeking to lead the English system away from excessive fear driven proceduralism and back to child protection social work that is child focused, real human practice. Anyone interested in child protection reform should read this document prepared by one of the worlds most respected and practical child protection thinkers”.
- All enquiries give little or no recognition to workers. Previous consultative processes have been seen as hollow procedures with a belief that outcomes have already been decided prior to any engagement with staff. A more fair method would be to for an independent assessment to conduct focus groups of child protection workers with the results made public.
- I have only worked in this area for a few years after having extensive work history in other Government areas. I continue to be astounded by the lack of resources given to child protection services.
- It seems incredible that the community is being told that the Reform Agenda is working well - it should be questioned. The Agenda itself has positive aspects but the reality is that it is not working as well as some would have you believe.
- I think Child Protection workers do the best they can under the circumstances-there are simply not enough of them to adequately meet the need.

The CPSU is available to appear before the Select Committee to answer and question or to provide clarification on any of the issues raised in this submission.

On behalf of the CPSU (SPSFT) Inc.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Tom Lynch', written in a cursive style.

**Tom Lynch
General Secretary**

12 November 2010