



Family &  
Community Services  
Community Services



## The Ministerial Advisory Group (MAG) on Transition of OOH Service Provision in NSW to the Non-Government Sector

### Communiqué 2 November 2011

As reported in our October 2011 communiqué, work is well underway in preparing the groundwork for the transition and we are on track in our planning for a January 2012 commencement date.

We are pleased to report our first major milestone has been achieved. Minister Goward has considered and endorsed the *OOHC Transition Plan Stage 1 – the 'who' and the 'when'* prepared for the Advisory Group by the Transition Planning Team. A copy of this plan is available on the ACWA, AbSec and FACS- Community Services websites.

This Stage 1 Transition Plan:

- articulates our shared vision and guiding principles as we described them in the October Communiqué,
- reflects our agreement that the focus for transition will be children and young people who enter statutory foster and statutory relative/kinship care and those who are currently in statutory foster and statutory relative/kinship placements provided by Community Services,
- details the estimated number of additional NGO placements that will be required to meet service demand in each Community Services region over the period of transition.

For the transition to be successful the diversity of service providers across the sector, in terms of their size and capacity to grow, has to be acknowledged. While some NGOs already have the capacity to deliver more services, others will need time and assistance to assume a greater role.

It is an imperative that the transition happens at a pace that matches the capacity of the agencies to deliver quality services. Overloading the NGO sector will only transfer some of the frailties of the existing system and this would not be in the best interests of the children and young people in care or their families.

Well integrated service delivery requires good partnerships. The substantial growth required will be a challenge for agencies and will require investment and support from Community Services teams at all levels and in all regions. The capacity of agencies in the NGO sector differs across regions, across agencies and across populations. Focussed support will maximise the chances of success across the state.

This transition plan is based on the premise that the first wave of growth will be driven by NGOs taking on new placements and current Community Services carers who choose to transfer to the NGO sector.

Work carried out to date suggests that more than half of all statutory placements held by Community Services could be transferred to the NGO sector within two years. NGO agencies and government staff are working productively together to build capacity that will enable the transfer of these and the remaining statutory placements as soon as possible thereafter.

This Stage 1 Transition Plan sets the foundations for the transition. We recognise that it is critical to build flexibility into the system as it reshapes and grows. This means that new service models, new ways of managing service delivery and new ways of working together must be considered.

While some initial consideration of service system components has been considered in the Stage 1 Plan, the full details of what these will look like are still to be worked out. We are continuing our work and consultations in order to be able to provide this detail in the Stage 2 Transition Plan in December 2011.

We have established a Communications Working Group to assist the Transition Planning Team. We want all agencies, their staff and carers and children and young people in OOHC to have the information they need to facilitate a smooth and successful transition.

Effective communication is obviously vital to the successful planning and implementation of this transition. We are working out strategies so that all stakeholders have opportunities to provide input into Regional Planning for the transition. To assist with planning in the Regions, FACS is preparing a detailed statistical report on the numbers of children and young people in statutory out-of-home care who are placed with Community Services. This report will be published on the FACS-Community Services website shortly.