





## FILE NOTE

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**DATE:** 3 May 2007

**AGENCY:** Hunter Aboriginal Children's Services

**NATURE OF CONTACT:** Agency Visit

**In attendance:**

OCG: Kerry Boland, Susan Nicholson, Helen Evans.

HACS: Steve Larkins, Adrian Elliot (Admin Manager) and Nikki (Senior CASE Manager).

**DETAILS:**

**Purpose of meeting:**

SN confirmed to review OCG concerns about poor performance of HACS.

SL advised that HACS had met with DoCS yesterday and that they were taking on f/c payments. Have go ahead that they will increase HACS' capacity from 30-60 within next 3 yrs therefore imperative that they get through accreditation. Dept have told him that they will put in \$\$\$ to help them across the line with OCG. Process with DoCS will due to start on 1 July 2007.

KB confirmed that deadline for OCG was 2013 and indicated that we could put together an intensive program to assist.

SL was positive about this suggestion. He indicated that a 3 yr program would align with the Matrix program too. SL confirmed that DoCS would like HACS to also put in an EOI for after care, a wrap around service for supporting ATSI kids in non ATSI foster care and is with HACS what needs to be done about standards and recommendation in APR – confirmed that HACS needs to get essential bits ticked off. KB indicated that OCG will need to know what the expansion will look like in due course and at the present need to prioritise. KB confirmed that OCG will map with HACS what needs to be done and review what significant standards need to be tackled.

KB confirmed that OCG had trialled a new approach with agencies experiencing expansion and this could be way forward for HACS. KB advised that the program was very challenging and agencies that had experienced a great deal of frustration which was very acute at the beginning as program loaded at the "front end." Gets easier as got through and get standards ticked off. However, KB confirmed that on positive side it is the fastest approach at

rising standards and most responsible for managing kids in out of home care. SN indicated that if joining a program it would mean a move from QIP and would have considerable demands on HACS. SL advised that OCG was concerned that HACS was growing very fast but the program would assist in ensuring that standards were addressed. SN then explained what the program entailed. In brief she confirmed that every couple of months HACS would be expected to submit evidence and this would be assessed and feedback given immediately.

SN then went through some of the issues raised in the last APR – lack of consistent use of LAC, the need for staff to have training. SL replied that the system is in place for staff to use...

SN also advised that we have concerns about management of foster carers and use of Step by Step and we need to see that HACS are using the full version and that this is reviewed with all existing as well as new ones.

SL advised that one of the 1<sup>st</sup> workers that HACS intends to employ with the new funds is a foster care specialist – they will only work with the carers.

SN confirmed that linked to this then was the issue of supervision and training of staff. SL acknowledged.

SL/KB brought up concerns about Ombudsman and reportable conduct. SL advised that he was reviewing policy and procedures and had responded as asked by HE. HE advised that when reviewing policy and procedure HACS could consider contacting their link person in the Ombudsman office and ask that they review the p&p as they are often happy to do this and part of their role. KB confirmed that agencies are often happy to do this as they have capacity to use particular expertise. SL advised that he was confident that he had a good system in place now the problem was in the past it was not so good it had lots of problems.

SL mentioned that there may be overlaps between OCG and work he has do with DoCS for EOI and capacity building. SN confirmed that OCG would draw up a timetable and try not to duplicate work he will doing with DoCS.

SL advised that the DoCS work will be around capacity building and this is not the same as the EOI.

SL asked that we give him feedback about the P&P manual and how best to address. SN confirmed that at present for this APR HACS has only met Org map. She confirmed that OCG was still finalising report and it will be sent out with draft timetable in due course.

KB indicated that with the program we would do it for 12 months and it would run for 3 years – no statutory compulsion but during period of big growth it would be good to get big standards out of the way.

SL indicated that HACS gets overwhelmed with all the things that need to get done and it can be very intensive.

SN suggested that the P&P manual would be submitted in pieces and that HACS should start thinking about how to begin collecting evidence on a continual basis.

SL asked if we had examples of P&Ps. Confirmed that he took most from the Kit. He indicated that he is thinking of employing a consultant to assist.

KB advised that the Kit is a guide only and must be adapted. She suggested that if HACS uses a consultant they could look at this aspect. She confirmed that OCG could name agencies that have used consultants and we can meet with the consultant and HACS at the appropriate time.

SL confirmed that he would be in Sydney 15/16 May and would be able to meet with us to review APR at this period.

KB/SN advised that in the meantime OCG would map a program. Big issues to address at the front will be BMP, F/C Ombudsman and record keeping.

SL acknowledged. He indicated that he was keen to have a P&P that reflected the work of HACS that a consultant could do the P&P and he would be able to use the time to collect the evidence. He also acknowledged that staff needed training.

**Agreed:**

1. OCG will put together a program for HACS to progress towards accreditation.
2. Meeting to be arranged for 15/16/17 May 2007 with HACS to review the APR and timetable.

**ACTION NEEDED:**

1. APR to be sent to HACS.
2. Develop program.
3. Confirm meeting to review above.

**Helen Evans**  
**Project Officer**

Dated: 3 May 2007