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OCG/01245

Ms Karen Elphick  
 Chairperson  
 Hunter Aboriginal Children's Services Inc  
 1 Elizabeth Street  
 Tighes Hill NSW 2304



Dear Ms Elphick

I am writing in regard to the on-site assessment conducted on 1 and 2 March 2011 as part of the revised *Program to meet accreditation criteria 2011 (the Program)* which required HACS to provide direct evidence for all *NSW Standards for Statutory Out-of-Home Care*. I understand that my staff provided feedback in a discussion with members of the HACS management team at the time of the assessment. I have attached our written *Feedback Report* to this letter.

The *Feedback Report* identifies a number of areas of good practice. However, I am concerned about your agency's overall lack of progress towards meeting the accreditation criteria. Despite ongoing feedback from my office, significant progress is still required to demonstrate sound and consistent practice in regards to child protection, case planning and review, monitoring of placements, and behaviour management.

In particular, I draw your attention to the need to ensure that there are consistent assessment and authorisation processes, and systems to address potential conflicts of interest, where a staff member becomes a foster carer for a child or young person in HACS' care.

While I am aware that, since the on-site assessment, serious events have occurred and that this is a difficult time for your agency, I urge you to consider the feedback carefully. If HACS is to achieve accreditation by July 2013, significant improvements in practice must be demonstrated.

The *Program to meet accreditation criteria 2011* has been amended to reflect the results of the recent assessment. An amended Program is enclosed. I must emphasise that it is essential HACS adheres to the requirements of each stage of the Program.

I understand that you are currently acting as interim Principal Officer for HACS. I would like to meet with you and your Management Committee to discuss your agency's progress with the current Program and, more broadly, towards accreditation. My office will contact you shortly to arrange a meeting at your earliest convenience.

Should you require any further information, please contact Ms Alli Prior, Senior Project Officer, on 8219 3614.

Yours sincerely

  
 Kerry Boland  
 Children's Guardian

28 April 2011

incl. *Feedback on Program to meet accreditation criteria*  
*Revised Program to meet accreditation criteria 2011*