

Letter to the Editor
Illawarra Mercury

4 April 2017

Dear Editor,

I am writing on behalf of the NSW Department of Family and Community Services (FACS) in response to the article, *On the street?* by Rachel Browne, published on April 4, 2017.

For the record, the department acknowledges the valuable work Youth Off the Streets (YOTS) does with young people across a range of services.

Residential care for young people who are in the care of the Minister is due for an overhaul. It is not serving them as well as it could.

FACS is currently undertaking a robust procurement process and service providers were asked to put their best case forward in an expression of interest. 26 service providers were selected to progress from the expression of interest to the request for tender stage – a further 26 applicants were unsuccessful and YOTS was one of eight existing providers in that group.

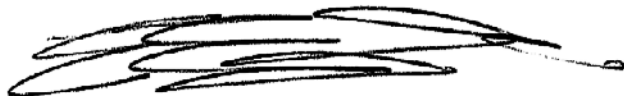
FACS has been transparent with all service providers and senior FACS staff met with senior YOTS staff, providing detailed feedback, including reasons for the decision on 20th March 2017. All discussions took place in the presence of an independent probity advisor.

FACS has consulted with non-government agencies, including YOTS, throughout this reform and there is broad agreement that NSW needs a high performing system for supporting vulnerable children and young people.

I want to reassure you that the new therapeutic system will focus on the recovery from trauma and abuse and support all children and young people to transition to a safe, permanent and loving environment.

If you have any questions or wish to discuss this further, please feel free to contact me on (02) 9716 2917.

Yours sincerely,



Eleri Morgan-Thomas
Executive Director
Service System Commissioning
Department of Family and Community Services