

July 19, 2009

Hon John Brumby
Premier of Victoria
1 Treasury Place
Melbourne VIC 3000

Dear Premier,

We are writing to you in response to the recent much publicized case of a two year old girl admitted to hospital as a result of abuse and the reported subsequent death of her father.

It is our long held view that internal inquiries into serious injury and death of children requiring child protection are completely insufficient. Children who are abused and or neglected have few if any advocates and therefore require transparent, accountable and responsive services. For this reason, we urge you to establish an independent judicial review of all the circumstances leading to this young girl's admission to Royal Children's Hospital.

Such a review, for example, could be undertaken by, or with the assistance of, the Victorian Ombudsman.

This review should examine the following:

1. the adequacy of practice standards guiding the decision making of child protection and related family support services;
2. the appropriateness of the threshold of harm suffered by children before child protection will take action to protect a child;
3. the adequacy of staffing and supervision and the impact of current workloads on frontline child protection staff and their supervisors;
4. the adequacy of child protection training of all child protection workers, their supervisors and managers;
5. the threshold used by child protection to trigger a referral to the police;
6. the quality out of home care for children who are removed from their family for their own protection; and,
7. whether or not child protection legislation needs to be changed to strengthen child protection responses to children.

TALKING IS THE
BEST MEDICINE

Stop child abuse

WHAT IS
Counseling is also good
because it brings the family
back together.

Happy
People

On behalf of Victoria's most vulnerable children, we also ask you to ensure that such independent reviews are undertaken in all child deaths and in serious cases of child abuse.

Yours sincerely,

Dr Joe Tucci
CEO
Australian Childhood Foundation

Michael Carr Greg
Adolescent Psychologist

Mr David Galbally, QC

Mr Neil Mitchell
3AW

Professor Chris Goddard
Director
Child Abuse Prevention Research Australia
Monash University