



A just cause

The NSW Government has before it a blueprint to improve the lives of all children and young people in this state. Justice Wood's report from his year-long Special Commission of Inquiry into Child Protection Services in NSW was presented to the NSW Government late last year. His report affirms that, "Child protection is the collective responsibility of the whole of government and of the community." (Executive Summary, page.v)

We are urging the NSW Government to fully resource and implement Justice Wood's recommendations. This is our chance as a community to make a real and lasting difference to lives of children and young people growing up in NSW.

We can't do this alone. We ask you to join with us in sending a message to our local members of parliament that we support the implementation of the Wood report. We believe that Justice Wood's plans to reform the child protection system will significantly improve the safety and wellbeing of children and young people in NSW.


Jane Woodruff

What is Wood's vision for children and young people?

The Special Commission of Inquiry into Child Protection Services in NSW was initiated following the tragic deaths of two young children in 2007. The report proposes wide-ranging reforms of our system to support children and young people. These include:

- creating new referral pathways so that it is easier for children, young people and their families to get help when they need it.
- establishing Regional Intake and Referral Services, operated by non-government organisations to help link families in need of support with appropriate services.
- expanding early intervention programs, such as Brighter Futures, which work with families to help improve parenting skills while supporting children's social, emotional and cognitive development as well as strategies to improve outcomes for Aboriginal children and young people.
- transferring services for children and young people who are unable to live with their families, such as foster care, to the non-government sector.

About UnitingCare Burnside

UnitingCare Burnside (Burnside) is a leading NSW child and family welfare agency that was established in 1911.

As part of the Uniting Church in Australia, Burnside has a strong commitment to promoting social justice through improving the life chances of disadvantaged children, young people and families.

Burnside is a member of UnitingCare Children, Young People and Families, an organisation that assisted more than 23,000 children, young people and families in NSW in 2008.

With more than 600 staff, Burnside services are concentrated in disadvantaged areas across NSW including Western Sydney, South Western Sydney, the Central and North Coasts and the Orana Far West regions.

Why your help is URGENT and NECESSARY

We need your help to send a strong message to government that every child and young person in NSW deserves the very best chance to have a safe and secure childhood.

The government is preparing its response now and its plan will go to Cabinet on Monday 23 February. This is our opportunity to encourage them to do the just and right thing.

We urge you to write to your local state member of parliament to tell them that you support Justice Wood's report. Your letter to have effect must be posted by close of mail Monday 16th February.

A sample letter is provided overleaf. Help us change the way we support children and young people in NSW.

Sample letter

DATE
INSERT NAME OF LOCAL MEMBER
Member for INSERT STATE ELECTORATE
INSERT ADDRESS

Dear

NSW Children Safe & Well

I write in regards to the NSW Government's Special Commission of Inquiry into Child Protection Services in NSW. As a concerned member of the community, I would like to encourage the NSW Government to implement the recommendations of the Wood Report. As Commissioner Wood writes in the Report, "Child protection is the collective responsibility of the whole of government and of the community". As INSERT YOUR ROLE, I work with (OR am aware of the needs of) many vulnerable children, young people and families who would benefit from the implementation of the recommendations of the Wood Report.

The numbers of children and young people suffering from abuse and neglect is growing in NSW. We urgently need to reverse this trend. The damage from abuse and neglect can last a lifetime. The cost of this damage is both human and economic, through increased demand for services including housing, health, education and juvenile justice. Investing in the safety and wellbeing of children is not only a moral imperative but fiscal commonsense; with not only cost benefits for the future but a more inclusive society.

Please convey my views in writing to NSW Minister for Community Services Hon Linda Burney MP and NSW Treasurer Hon Eric Roozendaal MLC.

Yours sincerely

INSERT YOUR NAME HERE
INSERT YOUR TITLE HERE

Tips

How do you write your letter of support?

To help you get started, you can download an electronic copy of this sample letter available from UnitingCare Burnside's website at www.burnside.org.au – click on the link How You Can Help - The Wood Report.

Who is your local state member of parliament?

You can find the name and contact details of your local state member of parliament on the NSW Parliamentary website at www.parliament.nsw.gov.au/prod/parlament/members.nsf/V3Home Click on the tab Members.

Which electorate do you live in?

If you are unsure what is your state government electorate, go to NSW Electoral Commission at www.elections.nsw.gov.au and scroll down on the home page to search for your local electorate.

Where can you get more information?

You can download the Executive Summary of Justice Wood's report on the Special Commission of Inquiry into Child Protection Services in NSW at www.lawlink.nsw.gov.au/cpinquiry You can also contact Romola Hollywood, Team Leader, Policy & Advocacy UnitingCare Burnside on 02 9407 3218 or email rhollywood@burnside.org.au

How do we measure effectiveness?

To help us keep track of the campaign

- post your letter to your local MP
- and send us a copy to UnitingCare Burnside - fax: 9687 6349 Attention Elizabeth Scully or email escully@burnside.org.au

Thank you for your support.