



## LETTER TO THE EDITOR

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23 February 2009

### EFFECTS OF CHILD ABUSE LAST A LIFETIME OR MORE

The Canadian study linking child abuse and neglect with genetic changes in the brain's response to stress ('Childhood abuse may change stress gene' February 23) offers further worrying evidence of the long-term damaging effects of child and abuse neglect, not just to victims but to their future offspring.

With NSW Government about to announce its response to Justice's Wood Special Commission of Inquiry into Child Protection Services in NSW, this latest research provides a timely reminder of the fundamental importance of investing in a range of services that will prevent child and abuse neglect and intervene early if problems do emerge.

Justice Wood's report provides a blueprint to significantly improve the child protection system in NSW including a greater focus on prevention and early intervention, a whole-of-government response and improving access to services across the spectrum of care. The Report also recommends changes to improve the lives of children and young people growing up in out-of-home care.

Perhaps this new Canadian study provides further evidence in support of reform to the NSW child protection system.

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