

<b>Article:</b>	Damning Ombudsman report info foster, kinship and residential care
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**VULNERABLE children in out-of-home care are being raped, left with drug dealers and turning to prostitution.**

A damning Ombudsman's report into foster, kinship and residential care found that children had limbs broken or were knocked unconscious by carers.

The report also found that the Department of Human Services' failure to follow procedures in two cases resulted in children being harmed.

**Stephen McMahon: Patience with Neville has worn thin**

Poor screening of carers and failure to follow procedures were slammed by the Ombudsman, George Brouwer.

"Further harm may have been avoided if adequate screening and assessment of their carers had occurred," Mr Brouwer said.

"There is evidence that a less rigorous screening process has been applied when placing children with family members which has placed some children at risk."

The latest bungling by the Department of Human Services under Community Services Minister Lisa Neville is expected to turn the blowtorch on the embattled minister.

But Premier John Brumby yesterday defended her.

"Lisa is a good minister, doing a fine job in what is a very tough area," he said.

Ms Neville said the abuse has seen eight carers either "deregistered or sacked" because of inappropriate physical or sexual abuse.

There are more than 5000 Victorian children being cared for by foster parents, extended family or residential homes every day.

"The care of young Victorians who can no longer live with their parents is my top priority - and we will continue to provide record funding and support to deliver a better system," she said.

Last year, a damning report described how an at-risk child was left in the care of a sex offender.

Mr Brouwer said there had been some positive steps in the area of policy reform for out-of-home care, but more work was needed.

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