

Child abuse rates in NZ remain "unacceptably high"

By Anna Leask

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New Zealand has "unacceptably high rates of family violence" – including child abuse – according to the Family Violence Death Review Committee.

Its 2008 report was prompted by the deaths of twins Chris and Cru Kahui in 2006 and Nia Glassie in 2007.

But since then, cases of horrific abuse against children, mostly aged two and under, have continued to occur.

In March, 2-year-old Seini Ikamanu was rushed to Starship Hospital with serious head injuries after an assault and underwent emergency surgery to relieve swelling in her brain. Two months later she is still in a coma.

A 27-year-old man with name suppression faces four counts of grievous bodily harm in relation to her injuries.

Last month a 13-year-old boy was referred to Youth Aid after allegedly injuring a 7-month-old in Invercargill. Police said the baby suffered head and chest injuries after she was shaken for a prolonged period.

Earlier this month, Wellington man Simon Bennett was sentenced to six years in jail after admitting a vicious attack on his 3-month-old son.

The baby suffered broken bones and bleeding in his brain after the attack in January last year. A report on the baby's health presented to the Wellington District Court indicated he suffered permanent brain damage.

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Chris and Cru Kahui. Photo / Supplied

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