

Amnesty International Australia (Ivanhoe Group)
PO Box 210, Ivanhoe VIC 3079.

11 December 2010

Committee Secretary
Senate Legal and Constitutional Committee
PO Box 6100
Parliament House
Canberra ACT 2600.
legcon.sen@aph.gov.au



Dear Secretary,

Re: Commonwealth Commissioner for Children and Young People Bill 2010

As volunteers within our local human rights activist group of Amnesty International Australia (AIA), we wish to make a submission to the inquiry about the Commonwealth Commissioner for Children and Young People Bill 2010. The views in this submission are those of our local volunteer members and are not necessarily the views of AIA.

We support the establishment of an independent Commonwealth Commissioner for Children and Young People, in order to more fully protect the human rights of people below the age of eighteen, particularly in the absence of an Australian Human Rights Bill.

We note that this Commissioner would advocate at a national level for the needs, rights and views of young people and thereby strengthen our national commitments to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the Convention on the Rights of the Child and the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights.

It is particularly important that the Commissioner acts on behalf of all children regardless of their citizenship or residency status. This would include all Australian citizens but also extend protection to children who are visitors to Australia, temporary residents or asylum seeker children.

We believe that Indigenous children, asylum seeker children, and all children who are subjected to family violence, are among those who urgently need further advocacy and protection.

We also believe that a Commonwealth Commissioner for Children and Young People would unite and strengthen the work of the Children's Commissioners who already operate in States and Territories across Australia.

Thank you for your efforts to extend human rights in Australia.

Yours sincerely,
On behalf of the members of the AIA Ivanhoe Group,

Stuart Harris
Convenor of AIA Ivanhoe Group

Prue Cerin
Secretary of AIA Ivanhoe Group