

Commonwealth Commissioner for Children and Young People Bill 2010

As of 12.11.10 there are around 800 children and teenagers locked up around Australia and Christmas Island. Half of these are unaccompanied minors, ranging in age from nine years old to 17 years.

Some of these children bear the physical and mental scars of beatings, seeing family members killed, and persecution both in their countries of origin and en route to Australia.

Many people have tried to help, and the Minister for Immigration has been notified of these children's predicament, but after many weeks nothing has been done because, in these children's cases, the Minister trumps everybody.

If we had a Commissioner for Children there would be only one door to knock upon for assistance.

Children and young people at risk, particularly children who arrive in Australia with no parental support, need specialist care and attention.

Such children should not be placed in immigration detention with a lot of mixed gender adults, some of whom possibly abused them en route to Australia. Neither should these children be left to the mercies of the ill-trained and ill-qualified contractors who run the immigration detention prisons.

Children's rights to protection should be enshrined in law, so children in future will not be placed in this dangerous situation.

Grace Gorman