



**THE HON PETER DUTTON MP
MINISTER FOR IMMIGRATION
AND BORDER PROTECTION**

Ref No: MC15-003538

Dr Dennis Jensen MP
Chair
Standing Committee on Petitions
Parliament House
CANBERRA ACT 2600



Dennis
Dear Dr Jensen

Thank you for your letter of 5 March 2015 on behalf of the Standing Committee on Petitions referring the petition of *Grandmothers Against Detention of Refugee Children* and their friends, concerning issues of children in detention. I apologise for the delay in responding.

Pursuant to Standing Order 209(b), relating to referring a petition to a Minister for response, please find enclosed the Immigration and Border Protection response to Petition Number 1016/1501.

Yours sincerely

29/7/15
PETER DUTTON

Immigration and Border Protection portfolio

RESPONSE TO PETITION

(Petition No. 1016/1501)

This petition of Grandmothers against detention of refugee children and their friends was submitted by the Standing Committee on Petitions for a response from the Minister for Immigration and Border Protection, in writing, on 5 March 2015:

The petition asks for conformity with the *1951 Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees* and its *1967 Protocol*, and the *1989 Convention on the Rights of the Child* as well as the release of children from detention.

Mr Dutton – The response to the petition question is:

As a party to the *1951 Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees* and its *1967 Protocol* and the *1989 Convention on the Rights of the Child* Australia takes its international obligations towards adult and minor asylum seekers seriously. Australia is committed to treating asylum seekers fairly and humanely and providing protection to refugees consistent with the obligations set out in the Refugees Convention and other relevant international treaties to which Australia is a party.

Mandatory immigration detention remains the policy for those who come to Australia illegally. This period of detention allows for the assessment of whether the person has a lawful right to remain in Australia and for the management of any health, identity and/or security risks they might present to the Australian community.

The Government takes the welfare of children seriously and moving children out of detention and into the community is a priority. The number of children in detention has decreased by over 90 per cent since July 2013.

A very small number of children may not be eligible for release into the community because they are part of families with adverse security or character assessments, or because they have ongoing health concerns.

Wherever possible and appropriate, these children are detained in low security alternative places of detention. All people in immigration detention, including families and children, are provided with appropriate care, treated with dignity and respect, and have their claims addressed as soon as is reasonably practicable and consistent with current policy settings.