



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

Ref No: MS15-000019

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

Dear **Dr** Jensen

Pursuant to Standing Order 209(b), I am writing to you in response to petition number 967/1438.

I note the six points in the petition mirror the recommendations made by the Australian Churches Refugee Taskforce in the report, 'Protecting the Lonely Children.' The department has considered this report and its recommendations. I would like to take this opportunity to reiterate that I take protection of children very seriously and am committed, as is the Department of Immigration and Border Protection, to ensuring that children are protected from abuse and exploitation.

Statutory child protection is the responsibility of the States and Territories and the department actively engages with relevant child welfare agencies on child protection matters. Service providers working with children in detention and the community must also, as a requirement under their contracts with the department, adhere to State and Territory legislation, including working with children checks. In addition, the department is seeking to finalise a robust and overarching children protection policy framework.

The parishioners of St John the Apostle Parish may wish to refer to the department's submission to the Australian Human Rights Commission's, National Inquiry into Children in Immigration Detention 2014. This submission addresses many of the recommendations contained in the petition and outlines the services, policies and processes that provide children with appropriate levels of care, welfare and support, including the significant improvements made to these arrangements in recent years. For a copy of the submission, please refer to: <https://www.humanrights.gov.au/our-work/asylum-seekers-and-refugees/national-inquiry-children-immigration-detention-2014-0>

Yours sincerely

PETER DUTTON