

Labor Senators' Additional Comments

1.1 The Bill is intended to establish an independent statutory office of Guardian for Unaccompanied Non-citizen Children (the Guardian) to advocate on behalf of non-citizen children who arrive in Australia or Australian external territories to seek humanitarian protection, who are unaccompanied by their parents or another responsible adult.

1.2 Many of the submitters believe there is a conflict of interest under the current system, pointing to the conflict of interest between the Minister as guardian of unaccompanied children in detention centres and the Minister as the decision maker on the outcome of these children's visas.

1.3 Labor Senators retain an open mind to any improvements that can be made to the system to ensure proper safeguards are in place to protect the wellbeing and best interests of children seeking protection. Labor Senators therefore support further exploration of the matters explored in the Bill.

Senator Sue Lines

Senator Catryna Bilyk

