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The Secretary  
Senate Community Affairs Reference Committee  
Suites S1 59  
Parliament House  
Canberra ACT 2600

### **Inquiry into children in institutional care**

I became aware of the work of this inquiry through a newsletter of MacKillop Family Services where I have worked in the past with children in out-of-home care.

I am sure that the Inquiry will receive submissions detailing the impact of institutional care on the lives of children at the time as well as the very long-term impacts in to adult life of their experiences, especially the effects of fear. Sadly there it is often very difficult to later undo the effects of harsh childhood experiences. Hopefully the Inquiry will be able to report that many practices in institutional care in Australia have changed radically from earlier times.

However I would like to suggest to the Inquiry that it deal in its report with the care of children who have been or are currently living in immigration detention. The experience of these children will no doubt be the subject of inquiry, blame and shame in the future. I believe we need to draw attention to the damage being done now to these traumatised children in this form of institutional care. Otherwise we will surely be again in the position in the future of struggling to repair or compensate for the damage done by fear and incomprehension of their current circumstances that these children suffer.

Yours faithfully,

Catherine King