



**COMMUNITY
CHILD CARE
CO-OPERATIVE**
LTD. (NSW)



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**Ethnic Community
Services Co-operative**
A voice for diversity and inclusion
(Formerly known as Ethnic Child Care, Family and Community Services Co-operative)

Media Release

We, Social Justice In Early Childhood (SJIEC), Community Child Care Cooperative NSW (CCCCNSW) and Ethnic Community Services Co-operative (ECSC) stand united with the Royal Children's Hospital, Melbourne, in advocating for child asylum seekers in detention both on and off shore. We are standing up for their rights as they face abuse and neglect. We demand that our Government release all children from detention.

Children's Week 30th October 2015

In this 2015 Children's Week we place our collective focus on children held in detention, both on our shores and off shore under the care of the Australian Government. We call on the Australian Government to immediately commit to the removal of child asylum seekers from detention centres and to then provide them with the care and education they so rightly deserve.

On the 7th of April this year, in an open letter to the Australian people, current and former workers on Nauru outlined the horrific conditions in which children were detained. Despite their letter and subsequent investigations, children still remain in these unacceptable conditions.

SJIEC member Cassandra Way reiterated statistics from a report authored by the ChilOut organisation (http://www.chilout.org/stats_reports), saying “as of 30 September there are:

- 113 children held in immigration detention facilities within the Australian mainland;
- 92 children held in detention on Nauru;
- 409 children detained in the community under residence determinations, a system referred to as Community Detention; and
- 3,861 children living in the community on Bridging Visas, which mean their parents generally have no work rights and very limited access to any Government support.”

These statistics are a shameful reflection on our country and our Government. It’s time to stand up and advocate for the children. We wouldn’t allow it to happen to children in our care as educators. Why is this Government letting it happen to children in their care?

Leanne Gibbs from Community Child Care NSW argued “The Human Rights Commission report *'The Forgotten Children'* details serious violations of the rights of children in detention centres. Yet our Government refuses to remove the children from these vulnerable and dangerous situations.”

Tamika Hicks SJIEC member said, “The detail outlined in this report is shocking. To think that this is happening to children in Australia is not only embarrassing but also abhorrent. The effects will last their entire lives and we refuse to stay silent. As a collective of Early Childhood Professionals, we stand united in solidarity with the Royal Children’s Hospital in demanding the release of these children.”

There is an overwhelming body of evidence that the Nauru and Manus Island camps are sites of regular and ongoing abuses, and that they need to be closed down immediately. Karol Florek, union researcher and refugee advocate said, “*The No Business in Abuse*” report released this week shows the complicity of Transfield, who are the key private contractor that operates on Nauru and Manus Island. Gross Human Rights violations are occurring on both islands.

Leanne Gibbs from CCCNSW highlights that “...within the National Quality Framework we place high value on 'belonging' as integral to human existence. The appalling conditions in which these children are subjected to does not reflect any values we as a country pride ourselves in.”

Mr Turnbull, we implore you to release all detained children immediately. Your Government has the ability and power to do so and we say enough is enough. We want action, now.



[#hiddenchildhoods](#) [#kidsout](#) [#allpeoplehavetherighttotheirrights](#)

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Social Justice in Early Childhood <http://www.sjiec.org/>

Community Child Care NSW <http://cccnsw.org.au>

Ethnic Community Services Co-operative <http://www.ecsc.org.au>