



# AUSTRALIAN CATHOLIC BISHOPS CONFERENCE

## Australian Catholic Migrant and Refugee Office



Australian Catholic  
Migrant &  
Refugee Office

### **Catholic Church Supports Call for Release of Children from Detention**

“The Catholic Church welcomes proposals by the Greens for children to be removed from Immigration detention centres,” Fr Maurizio Pettena, Director of the Australian Catholic Migrant and Refugee Office, said today. Fr Pettena was responding to calls by the Greens, supported by the Liberals, to release children from detention centres.

“Both in its pastoral activity and in its advocacy, the Catholic Church has always been advocating for the release of children from the detention centres.” Fr Pettena said.

“The Catholic Church has been active over many years working with asylum seekers, both inside detention centres and after they are released. Our workers have seen the trauma and the damage that is caused by indefinite and, in many cases, arbitrary detention. There must be a better way,” Fr Pettena said.

“Detention is particularly cruel and particularly inappropriate for children.”

“We note that the Social Justice Commissioner’s report on Indigenous Deaths in Custody 1989-1996 said in part (recommendation 10) “disruption to the lives of children should be a strong consideration” and “Mothers of young children should not be detained unless absolutely necessary.”

“If the Social Justice Commissioner was correct 14 years ago regarding Indigenous women and children, his comments are also correct today regarding women and children in immigration detention.”

“The time has long passed, if it ever existed, for the wholesale detention of women and children in Immigration detention”, Fr Pettena said.

“We call on the Government to release children from detention.”

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