



MEDIA RELEASE

12 February 2015

ABA welcomes Children in Detention Report

The Australian Bar Association (ABA) has welcomed the Australian Human Rights Commission Report on children in detention, tabled in Federal Parliament last night, and urged the Federal Government to act upon the key recommendations to release children and their families from immigration detention in Australia and in Nauru.

“This Report, *The Forgotten Children*, was the result of a National Inquiry commenced in February 2014. It considers the laws, policies and practices concerning the mandatory detention of children in immigration detention under successive governments and thoroughly documents the grave impact upon the well-being and development of those children over the last ten years.” said ABA President, Fiona McLeod SC.

“The Report is supported by expert medical assistance and establishes that long periods of mandatory detention have had a significant impact on the well-being and development of these vulnerable children,” she said.

“We welcome the progress made by the Australian Government to date - most of the 1138 children detained at the start of last year have now been released into the community or into community detention. However, the fact that more than 200 children remain in detention in Australia and a further 120 are held in Nauru exposed to the risk of further harm is a matter of grave concern.”

“The detention of these children for indefinite periods breaches our international obligations under the Convention on the Rights of the Child and cannot go on. We have a responsibility to these children in our care.”

“We urge the Australian Government to act quickly upon the Report’s two key recommendations – to release the children still kept in detention into the community with their families and to amend the Migration Act to strictly limit the period of time children and their families can be detained for the purposes of health, identity and security checks” Ms McLeod concluded.

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