OUR HOMELESS CHILDREN

REPORT OF THE NATIONAL INQUIRY INTO HOMELESS CHILDREN

HUMAN RIGHTS AND EQUAL OPPORTUNITY COMMISSION

Australian Government Publishing Service
Canberra 1989
NOTES

1. This Report frequently quotes from written submissions to the Inquiry. These are referred to by the letter ‘S’ and a number. Particulars of a quoted submission can be found in Appendix B.

2. Quotes from the United Nations Declaration of the Rights of the Child are exactly as they appear in the Declaration adopted in 1959. The United Nations has since adopted a policy of using gender neutral language in official texts. This policy is reflected in the new Convention on the Rights of the Child presently being concluded.
10 February 1989

The Hon. L.F. Bowen MP  
Deputy Prime Minister & Attorney General  
Parliament House  
CANBERRA ACT 2600

Dear Attorney

It is with deep concern that we present the Report of our National Inquiry into Homeless Children and Young People. On behalf of the many thousands of children affected, we respectfully request that the Government give urgent consideration to the Report and to the recommendations we have made.

Yours sincerely

[Brian Burdekin's signature]

BRIAN BURDEKIN  
Federal Human Rights Commissioner  
(Chairman of the Inquiry)

JAN CARTER  
Director  
Social Policy & Research Centre  
Brotherhood of St Laurence

[Signature]

FATHER WALLY DETHLEFS
This Report has been made possible by the many thoughtful written and oral submissions received from members of the public, community organisations, homeless children, and Federal, State and Territory governments. The problems which it identifies require responses not only from governments, but from our communities and, indeed, each of us as individuals. In compiling the Report, we found a major difficulty to be the lack of research in Australia on the plight of homeless people in general, and homeless children in particular. We also found many dedicated individuals and organisations working with very little information and very few resources — often unaware of developments elsewhere in Australia that could have assisted their efforts. We have tried, therefore, within the limits of our resources, to include material that will give the Report some continuing value as a reference for those working with homeless children.

We have attempted to take account of all relevant reports and studies previously made by government and non-government bodies. We record here our appreciation for the light which these have thrown on our efforts. We also wish to place on record our appreciation to staff of the Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission for their dedication, professionalism and sheer hard work. Many contributed but we wish to thank particularly Bill Chapman, Meredith Wilkie, Warren Simmons, Jim Fouras, Amanda Bowden, David Mason and Patricia Mohan.
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