



Social Justice In Early Childhood 8th Annual Conference

Action resulting from 'On the Couch' session

Asylum seekers, refugees and children in detention

Five points for action (include these points in your letters to politicians):

- Abandon policy on deportation to Malaysia or any other country
- Oppose transfer of vulnerable children and vulnerable groups – the policy contravenes rights of the child UNCROC
- Malaysia is not a signatory to UNHCR – reports from Human Rights Watch that detainees are beaten in detention; grave concerns for the treatment of asylum seekers in Malaysia
- Stop offshore processing on Christmas Island and long term mandatory detention – release into community for health and education
- Economic disaster of sending asylum seekers to Malaysia (or other places) – costs more to do this than to allow asylum seekers to live in communities

SJ Conf Organisers to do:

- Connect with other organisations like GetUp – steps have already been taken to connect; we'll keep you posted on developments
- Myth busters fact sheet – see the SJ website for 2 myth busters downloads

ALL SJ members to do:

- Contact your local politicians and the relevant federal Minister/Shadow Minister by phone - ask to speak to the senior policy advisor – don't accept the gatekeeper who answers the phone; challenge them – don't be afraid
- Send off letters about children in detention to politicians weekly using the above five points for action
- Circulate the myth busters fact sheet to families at your centre or students
- ChilOut – to support the people at ChilOut, go to: http://www.chilout.org/index.php?p=1_5
- The organisation GetUp! is seeking members' votes for what campaigns they should run. You can vote for GetUp! to relaunch the **NO CHILD IN DETENTION** campaign by going to this link: <http://suggest.getup.org.au/forums/60819-getup-campaign-suggestions/suggestions/1897389-the-no-child-in-detention-campaign-needs-to-be-re-?ref=title>

Access and affordability

What we want:

- Subsidized universal access with low level government intervention in curriculum/pedagogy etc (we don't want to replicate the school system); maintaining autonomy within centres to envisage curriculum
- Affordability – fully subsidized for all early years children not just 4 year olds
- Professional status of the field? How do people perceive of the field if it is referred to as an industry? Refer to EC sector as a profession

What concerns us:

- Teachers Institute: ECTs are not considered teachers (university graduates are not recognized by the institute and therefore they are not eligible to teach in primary schools); Teachers Institute dictates curriculum content for university degrees
- Qualifications: independent colleges providing courses for EC qualifications/training – the 'quality' of the courses can be poor; VTAB – make a formal complaint
- Tension around qualification requirements and those in the sector who cannot up their quals (for various reasons) (e.g. immigrant women); translation of documents; TAFE lost funding for the LLMP
- TAFE: funding cuts (due to private colleges providing cheaper courses but are badged 'best practice')

SJ Conf Organisers to do:

- Letter re. access and affordability to Tanya Plibersek (Minister for Social Inclusion), Peter Garrett (Minister for School Education, Early Childhood and Youth) and Kate Ellis (Minister for Employment Participation and Child Care)

ALL SJ members to do:

- Talking about our profession in terms of social justice outside the ece community – to families
- To get the ECE field thinking about social justice issues, set up sister centres to discuss (also, TAFE is always looking for centres that they can take TAFE students to – get in touch with your local TAFE)
- Send stories of about social justice and equity in EC practice to local newspapers
- Take children out to the community beyond the centre – make children visible and convince the community of the importance of children
- Unions are important – advocating for the rights of workers; 'Teachers are teachers' Campaign; Big Steps Campaign

Indigenous

What concerns us:

- Tension of non-Indigenous wanting to 'know', do, act etc versus draining the resources of Indigenous organisations
- Seeking literature to inform, rather than always calling on indigenous organisations
- Indigenous playgroup: multi-mix mob – doing really good work
- NT intervention

SJ Conf Organisers to do:

- Letter re. Northern Territory intervention to Julia Gillard and Jenny Macklin (Minister for Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs).

www.socialjusticeinearlychildhood.org