



Darwin Asylum Seeker Support and Advocacy Network

Media Release

More Children Locked Up in Darwin Detention Centres

3 August 2011

The Darwin Asylum Seeker Support and Advocacy Network (DASSAN) today expressed concern about the increase of the number of children being detained in immigration detention centres in Darwin. As at 3 August 2011 figures provided by the Department of Immigration and Citizenship indicated that there are currently 180 children being detained in Darwin. This is significant increase on the approximately 100 children who were being detained on 30 June 2011 when Immigration Minister Chris Bowen announced that the government had met its target to remove the majority of children from detention by the end of June.

DASSAN member Mr Carl O'Connor said today that the increase in the number of children in detention in Darwin raises serious concerns about the Minister's commitment to remove all children from detention.

"Members of DASSAN who visit children and families in detention report meeting sad and withdrawn children" said Mr O'Connor. "These children have their daily life governed by security guards who have had no training in working with children, or in dealing with survivors of trauma"

"During the month of July, significant numbers of Darwin based asylum seekers attempted suicide, self-harmed, and went on hunger strike whilst in detention. The Commonwealth Ombudsman is so concerned about the state of detention centres that he last week launched an inquiry into these kinds of incidents. These are not places where children should be living."

President of the Australian Medical Association (NT) Dr Paul Bauert has previously expressed concern about the practice of detaining children in immigration detention, stating that "we know that at least 95 per cent of these kids we see will eventually end up being Australian citizens and we are damaging them."

(<http://www.abc.net.au/news/stories/2011/05/28/3229578.htm?site=darwin>)

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