

# Detention for Detention – Resource for the Event

Good morning/afternoon everyone

Thank you for giving up your time today as an act of solidarity with our newest Australians, asylum seekers. You have voluntarily given yourself a detention as a way of showing that that we think it isn’t just or fair that there are currently children being held in detention, having committed no crime.

The latest available statistics, as at 31 March this year, show that:

## **124 children are held in immigration detention facilities within Australia**

## **103 children are held in detention on Nauru**

## **1,282 children are detained in the community under residence determinations, a system referred to as community detention**

## **2,760 children are living in the community on bridging visas which mean their parents generally have no work rights and very limited access to any Government support**

The really good news is that in the past few years, the number of children in detention has significantly dropped. In fact, it is events like this today that help convince our leaders that children in detention is not something many people in the Australian society want to see.

This is a really complex issue, but today, our message is simple:

**ONE CHILD IN DETENTION IS ONE TOO MANY.**

As a Catholic school in the Edmund Rice tradition, we state publicly that we try to live by gospel values. One key gospel message, most clearly stated in Matthew’s gospel, is the importance of welcoming the stranger. As Catholics, we are called to have compassion for the most vulnerable people in our society, and to help to amplify their voices. Today, in this simple act, we are advocating for kids living in detention, and we are saying “You are welcome here”.

Let’s now stand/sit in silence for a few minutes as we reflect on the plight of kids who will be sleeping in detention tonight.

SILENCE

Now, let us finish with a prayer for solidarity.

**A prayer for solidarity**

God of all creation  
You have given us the beautiful land we call Australia.  
Rich in ancient culture and tradition,  
Rich in landscape, plants and animal life;  
Rich in resources, laws and social structure,  
Offering safety and opportunity.

Teach us to see those who are at our gates,  
To act justly so all may come to the table and  
To weep for those who perish before they are invited.

Where there is hunger in our world  
May we share our food and resources  
and contribute our skills and knowledge  
to create a sustainable food supply.

Where there is disaster  
May we respond quickly and generously  
To bring relief to those injured and deprived of homes  
and help them to rebuild their lives and communities.

Where there are people who are disabled  
May we see them first as people  
and work tirelessly to ensure they are always included  
and have the resources to reach their full potential.

Where people are displaced from their own lands,  
Especially those who seek refuge on our shores,  
May we dare to put ourselves in their shoes  
And welcome them to share in the life gifted to us.

Where Indigenous communities are displaced in their own land,  
May we acknowledge the wrongs of the past,  
Recognise the richness of their culture  
And empower all Indigenous Peoples   
to determine their own future.

God of all creation  
Give us clear eyes to see the whole world  
So that we may never take for granted the gifts you have given  
Or think they belong to us alone.  
Give us open hearts to reach out from our comfort  
and open our gates  
To walk in new solidarity with our neighbours.