

# *For whom the bells toll...*

**Ring out your bells  
in support of asylum seekers in detention**

**Thursday, 10 June 2004  
5.15 pm for 5 – 10 minutes**

On 13 May 2004, the HREOC Report *A Last Resort?* (on children in detention) was released. Some of the Reports findings were –

1. Australia's immigration detention laws created a detention system that was fundamentally inconsistent with the *UN Convention on the Rights of the Child* (CRC).
2. Children in immigration detention, for long periods of time, were at risk of serious mental harm.
3. At various times (between 1999 and 2002), children in immigration detention were not in a position to fully enjoy –
  - the right to be protected from all forms of physical or mental violence
  - the right to enjoy the highest attainable standard of physical and mental health
  - the right of children with disabilities to *enjoy a full and decent life, in conditions which ensure dignity, promote self-reliance and facilitate the child's active participation in the community*
  - the right to an appropriate education on the basis of equal opportunity
  - the right of unaccompanied children to receive special protection and assistance to ensure the enjoyment of all rights under the CRC.

The Report recommended that children in immigration detention should be released with their parents as soon as possible, but no later than 4 weeks after the tabling of the Report. The deadline for their release would be close of business on Thursday, 10 June 2004.

As a sign that we have not forgotten these children and their families, we are asking every church to ring their bells for 5-10 minutes from 5.15 pm and to continue to do so on the 10<sup>th</sup> of each month until every man, woman and child have been released from mandatory detention and a better, more compassionate system has been instituted to handle the arrival of asylum seekers in the future.

Prior to the tolling of the bells, you may like to have a short reflection service on why we are tolling the bells.

You may like to invite other churches in your area to join in.

You may also know of other buildings in your area, such as town halls, that may be prepared to set their clocks to ring out at the same time also.