

AN AUSTRALIAN COMMISSIONER FOR CHILDREN

proposal coming soon!

DCI is planning to issue a detailed proposal for the establishment of an Office of Commissioner for Children in Australia.

In recent years agencies and groups with an interest in children's rights or the general wellbeing of children have made various proposals for such an office. The Queensland Government has also established Australia's first Commissioner for Children, and there are moves to set up similar offices in other States, for example NSW and Tasmania.

DCI's approach is to develop a proposal that takes account of the work that has already been done and draws on aspects where there seems to be a general consensus on the structure, roles and responsibilities of a Commissioner.

June Wangmann, who is working on this project for DCI during study leave from Macquarie University, has reviewed all submissions (718 at 20.5.98) sent to the Joint Committee on Treaties Inquiry into the status of the Convention on the Rights of the Child in Australia, as well as the public hearings held during the inquiry.

DCI expects the paper to be available in July. Contact the National Office for your copy.

Obituary

*A man of outstanding vision
and committment to children*

In 1994, Dr Harry McGurk came to Australia from Scotland to be Director of the Australian Institute of Family Studies. Harry was an international leader in the field of developmental psychology. As an energetic researcher with a focus on behavioural development and a Quaker with an abiding committment to social justice, Harry was a strong advocate for children and children's rights, especially in the early childhood field.

Harry made the rights and well-being of children a specific focus of his work at the Australian Institute of Family Studies. He welcomed representations from DCI about children's rights issues in research, and generously exchanged publications with us.

He was particularly concerned with quality in early childhood programs and wrote extensively in this area. At the time of his death he, along with other members of a partnership, had just completed a research project for the De-

partment of Health and Family Services. This project was a feasibility study of a national longitudinal research program on the effects of child care on the development, health and well-being of Australian children.

It had always been Harry's vision to undertake a longitudinal study of this kind in Australia. Harry's outstanding contribution to children and families will be very much missed in Australia and the rest of the world.

Helen Bayes



Harry McGurk, 23.2.36 to 17.4.98