



November 20
Universal Day of Children's Rights

10 – 9 – 8 – 7 – 6 – 5 – 4 – 3 – **2** – 1

GETTING TO KNOW AUSTRALIA

This is the second to last day in our countdown. Tomorrow we will celebrate the *Universal Day of the Child*. 10, 9, 8, 7, 6, 5, 4, 3, 2...

Yesterday we read something about the *Committee on the Rights of the Child*. In many countries, there is a National Council on the *Rights of the Child*. The creation of these Councils is a right that many countries still have to achieve and implement.

Today we will get to know Australia, the last country on our list. It is a much bigger “island” than Madagascar! You have probably seen a live kangaroo, a koala, a eucalyptus tree, and many other beautiful things that come from that continent. Click [here](#) for more information.

Remember that the first objective of the *Universal Children's Day* celebration is to *promote mutual exchange and understanding among children, adolescents, and young people*.

Like the previous countries we mentioned, Australia also received recommendations from the United Nations regarding the *Rights of the Child*:

“Establish a National Court for Compensation, as recommended by the report ‘Bringing them Home’, in order to compensate the Torres Strait aboriginal and islander people that were adversely affected by the assimilation policy, especially the children unfairly separated from their families, as well as the parents separated from their children” (Recommendation submitted by Slovenia).

“Ensure that no child is detained because of his or her migratory situation, and provide assistance and protection to non-accompanied minors” (Recommendation submitted by Brazil).

We present you with the testimony of another Marist student who speaks about these recommendations. He reflects about the *Rights of the Child* in his great country, Australia.

Convention on the Rights of the Child - Article 30

In those States in which ethnic, religious or linguistic minorities or persons of indigenous origin exist, a child belonging to such a minority or who is indigenous shall not be denied the right, in community with other members of his or her group, to enjoy his or her own culture, to profess and practise his or her own religion, or to use his or her own language.

“The quality of life for children in Australia varies drastically depending on specific region, and as such, blanket statements and policies are often difficult to implement to great effect. For example, the recommendation published by Slovenia, indicating the desire to establish a Compensation Tribunal for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people who were negatively affected by the Assimilation Policy of the fifties may be beneficial in some cases, but does not take into consideration the pertinent issues within Aboriginal communities relative to misuse of welfare and government payments. As such, it is my belief that any sort of change in attitude or stance pertaining to the rights of children needs to reflect the individual location and circumstance of the case in question.

With this in mind, the recommendations made by Morocco and Switzerland, which entail adapting and strengthening federal legislation in order to combat discrimination and ensure greater safety for women and children, would do well to be considered by authoritative bodies.

Out of all the recommendations presented in the document, perhaps the most contemporarily relevant is the Brazilian: ‘Ensure that no children are held in detention on the basis of their migratory status and that special protection and assistance is provided to unaccompanied children.’ With recent revelations and insights as to the poor treatment of children in asylum seeker detention centres under the currently strict immigration policy of the government, this recommendation should be taken into serious account as the country moves forward.

In summary, it is my opinion that the best recommendations presented by the nations are the ones that are focused and allow for a case-by case analysis for children being affected by disadvantage and poverty in our modern Australian society”.

Darcy Bowers, Marist student.

What do you make of Darcy’s testimony? Are indigenous people and migrants discriminated in your country? You can read what the Convention states about non-discrimination and imprisonment in [articles 2 and 27](#).

What does your Marist community and your colleagues make about this? Bring about a discussion in your classroom.

[FMSI](#) would welcome your feedback, so please leave your comments at the Foundation’s [Facebook](#) page. We invite you to reflect on these important issues regarding the children of your country and of the entire world.

Stay tuned! Tomorrow is the last day!

