



National Inquiry into Children in Immigration Detention

INQUIRY COMMISSIONERS

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*Human Rights Commissioner & Acting Disability Discrimination Commissioner –
Dr Sev Ozdowski OAM*

Until his appointment as Human Rights Commissioner and Acting Disability Discrimination Commissioner, Dr Sev Ozdowski OAM was Chief Executive of South Australia's Office of Multicultural and International Affairs.

Dr Ozdowski has a long-term commitment to human rights and his relationship with the Human Rights Commission dates back to the original Commission of the early 1980s. He is the author of many papers on sociology of law, human rights, immigration and multiculturalism.

His five-year term as Human Rights Commissioner and Acting Disability Discrimination Commissioner began on 8 December 2000.

Born in Poland in 1949, Dr Ozdowski migrated to Australia in 1975. He has held senior positions in the Federal portfolios of the Prime Minister and Cabinet, Attorney-General's and Foreign Affairs and Trade. He has also worked as Secretary of the Human Rights Commission inquiry into the *Migration Act 1958* and for the Joint Parliamentary Committee on Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade.

Dr Ozdowski has a Master of Laws and Master of Arts in Sociology from Poznan University, Poland, and a PhD in Sociology of Law from the University of New England, Armidale, NSW. He was awarded a Harkness Fellowship in 1984 for post-doctoral work on race relations, international human rights and immigration law and public administration - studies that took him from Harvard University (Cambridge, Massachusetts) to Georgetown University (Washington DC) and the University of California (Berkeley, California).

Dr Ozdowski's work for the Polish community, including refugees, and his commitment to enhancing Australia-Poland relations was rewarded with an OAM in 1995 and with the Chevalier of the Order of Merit of the Republic of Poland in 2000.

ASSISTANT COMMISSIONERS

Two Assistant Commissioners were appointed to assist the Inquiry. Prof Trang Thomas and Dr Robin Sullivan assisted the Inquiry in providing advice in their respective fields of expertise (as set out below) and assisted with public hearings.

*Commissioner for Children and Young People, Queensland –
Dr Robin Sullivan (CertTch (KGTC), HA, H.Ed(Qld), M.Ed (JCU), D.Univ (QUT), FACE, FQIEA)*

Dr Sullivan was appointed Children's Commissioner in April 1999 after a distinguished career in the Queensland Department of Education. Her contribution to the education system includes a wealth of practical experience and theoretical research. She was trained as a teacher of History and English, and advanced through the school based administrative hierarchy to become a secondary school principal.

Dr Sullivan was promoted to a number of senior positions in the Queensland State Education Department culminating in her appointment as the first female Deputy-Director General of Education in 1997. Many of these positions had a focus on curriculum, learning and teaching, including a specific interest in disadvantaged children.

As the Queensland Commissioner for Children and Young People, Dr Sullivan is a member of various groups including the Child Protection Council, the Queensland Crime and Misconduct Commission Reference Group, and the Queensland Child Care Forum. In 2001, she was appointed by the Premier of Queensland as Honorary Mediator for the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting (CHOGM). She was awarded the Qld Chapter Medal of the Australian College of Education for 2001.

Dr Sullivan contributes to a range of children's issues and policy agendas at the state and national levels.

*Professor of Psychology at the Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology –
Professor Trang Thomas AM*

Trang Thomas graduated with Bachelor of Arts with First class Honours (University of NSW), Master with Honours (Macquarie University) and Ph.D in Psychology (La Trobe University). She was former Director of the Centre for Applied Social Research at RMIT and is currently Director of Science of the Australian Psychological Society.

She has conducted numerous research projects in Developmental Psychology and has produced over 100 research papers, keynote addresses and conference presentations; as well as many feature articles in the print and television media.

Professor Thomas chaired a major inquiry into the adequacy of State government services in Victoria for non-English speaking people in 1996. The Inquiry's five-volume report included 160 recommendations of which many have been implemented. Her dedication to research with applied social impact has brought her several awards, including the Alumni Achievement award from the University of New South Wales, the Inaugural Distinguished Alumni award from La Trobe University, and the Order of Australia (AM).

Her past appointments include Chair of the Victorian Multicultural Commission, Board of SBS, Board of the Council for Adult Education, Advisory Board of the International Conflict Resolution Centre and the Victorian Casino and Gambling Authority. She was also a delegate to the 1998 Constitutional Convention in Canberra. Current appointments include member of the National Council for Multicultural Australia, the National Council for the Centenary of Federation, and National Health and Medical Research Council.