

Presentation Justice



PRESENTATION
Australia

A reflection for April

“No child shall be deprived of his or her liberty unlawfully or arbitrarily. The arrest, detention or imprisonment of a child shall be in conformity with the law and shall be used only as a measure of last resort and for the shortest appropriate period of time.”

From Article 37 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child

The International Presentation Association’s submission to Australia’s Universal Periodic Review (2026) highlighted a number of threats to the rights of children within the Australian penal system:

- the national minimum age of criminal responsibility that is ten years;
- that children as young as ten are being detained in watch-houses for long periods and often under harsh conditions;
- Australia’s reservation to Article 37 (c) of the Convention on the Rights of the Child requiring the separation of children from adults in detention;
- the "adult crime, adult time" policy in Queensland that has been condemned by the United Nations for being incompatible with basic child rights;
- the disproportionate number of Indigenous children affected by punitive youth justice systems.

In advancing its commitment to human rights and the dignity of all, the International Presentation Association advocates for the Australian Government to address these concerns by:

- raising the national minimum age of criminal responsibility to at least fourteen years of age, consistent with international standards;
- withdrawing all reservations to Article 37 (c) of the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) requiring the separation of children from adults in detention;
- reforming youth justice systems so that they uphold the rights of children;
- addressing the fundamental causes of youth crime, especially poverty and generational disadvantage.

Image: Nano Nagle, Foundress of the Sisters of the Presentation © Jen Norton. Used with permission.



As we approach the anniversary of Nano Nagle's death on 26 April 1784, let us reflect on her vision to restore the dignity of young people made poor and her unwavering commitment to the power of education as a source of social liberation.

Let us pray:

**God of Justice,
we come before You
with hearts full of love
for the children of the world.**

**We ask for Your blessing on them
and pray for the protection
of their fundamental rights:
the right to life,
to safety,
to education
and to love.**

**Shield them from harm,
abuse, poverty and injustice.**

**We pray that children's voices are heard
within their families, communities
and by leaders of government,
so that they may have agency
in shaping their identity and purpose.**

**Strengthen us
to advocate for their rights
and secure a future
where every child
can have life to its fullest.**

**We ask this in the name
of Jesus, Your Son,
who called the children to him.
Amen.**