

# **Submission on the Draft Childrens Amendment Bill to the Western Cape Provincial Parliament Standing Committee on Social Development**

## **Executive Summary**

**from: The Homestead ,Ons Plek Projects and Western Cape Street Childrens Forum.**

### **Details of Submitting Organizations**

The Homestead, for street boys have developed a comprehensive range of prevention and developmental services since 1982.

Ons Plek Projects for Female Street Children have developed a comprehensive range of prevention and developmental services since 1988

Western Cape Street Childrens Forum are a network of 50 NGOs working with street children in the Western Cape.

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### **Executive Summary**

The Amendment Bill treats street children differently to all other children and allows for second rate treatment for them. Thus the main concern of the submission is that the provisions perpetuate the problem of street children and detract from the chances of getting them off the street. The submission motivates for a few very simple changes to be made to the bill at little or no extra cost.

Chapter 14 makes Shelters only places of shelter to keep children warm, dry, and fed in hygienic conditions. The complete absence of any developmental programmes deprives the children of their constitutional rights to fully fledged services like other children in the Bill.

We recommend that all references to Shelters be deleted from Chapter 14 and that Shelters be relocated to Chapter 13 as Child and Youth Care Centres which ensure high standards of care to all children in need of care.

We recommend that a few clauses be added to Chapter 14 to ensure acceptable standards of care in drop in centres

**Section 219** requires the addition of two subsections. One to provide for a Management Board for Drop In Centres, and a second to provide for the staff and managers of Drop In Centres to be adequately qualified and in sufficient numbers to provide protection to children at the Drop In Centre

**Section 220** on minimum standards needs two additional clauses so that Drop In Centres work developmentally and do not just provide space, water, toilets and so on.

**Section 225** should be deleted. We feel strongly that no functions should be assigned to municipalities, because too often the agenda of municipalities is driven by business interests and not the interests of the children. The Department of Social Development is the appropriate body to carry out functions related to the protection of children.