



The Royal Australasian
College of Physicians

Media Statement

RACP urges Government to release children from detention

24 September 2015

The Royal Australasian College of Physicians has welcomed the Prime Minister's initial comments to consider changes to Australia's asylum seeker policy.

RACP President Laureate Professor Nick Talley said the recent report of the Senate Committee that recommended the immediate release of all children from detention in Nauru highlighted that immigration detention, particularly of children in remote offshore locations, is severely damaging the health of those detained.

"The recent report compounded multiple reports to date, that those in detention are suffering and that children are at severe risk of sexual harassment and assault in Nauru.

"The recent Senate Committee report confirmed the tragic reality that those held in immigration detention, and particularly children, are vulnerable, and are not being protected from sexual harassment and assault.

"This situation is unacceptable. The RACP calls on the Government to respond swiftly to the Senate report and remove all children and their families into the Australian community.

The RACP particularly supports the following recommendations of the Committee -

- The complete removal of asylum seeker children and their families from detention on Nauru (Recommendation 11)
- A comprehensive audit of all allegations of sexual abuse, child abuse and other criminal conduct at the detention centre (Recommendation 13)
- New laws requiring mandatory reporting of any reasonable suspected unlawful sexual contact, sexual harassment, unreasonable use of force or other assault against asylum seekers (Recommendation 14)

"Time and again, the Australian public has seen inquiries and heard excuses for the wrongs committed against children inside these detention centres.

"The RACP will continue to advocate for the immediate end to immigration detention including release of all children as well as for urgent amendments to the newly introduced Australian Border Force Act.

"The health and wellbeing of children should never be open to compromise.

"No child should be held in detention.

Ends

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