



**From the President**

29 June 2018

The Hon Gladys Berejiklian MP  
Premier of New South Wales  
52 Martin Place  
SYDNEY NSW 2000

Via Email: [REDACTED]

Dear Premier

**'Real Bodies - The Exhibition' breaches established ethical norms and respect of the person and should be shut down with immediate effect**

The Royal Australasian College of Physicians (RACP) would like to bring to your attention the significant ethical concerns we have regarding 'Real Bodies - The Exhibition' currently showing at the Byron Kennedy Hall in the Entertainment Quarter at Moore Park, Sydney.

The RACP is a diverse organisation responsible for training, educating and representing over 24,500 medical specialists and trainee specialists in Australia and New Zealand. Our members cover 33 different specialties including internal medicine, paediatrics, public health medicine, occupational and environmental medicine, rehabilitation medicine, addiction medicine, palliative medicine and sexual health medicine.

Whilst the RACP supports public education about health, illness, the body and anatomy and recognises that the body can also be represented in art, this must always satisfy established ethical norms and demonstrate respect for the person. Ethical norms and respect for the person manifest through consent and through the ethical sourcing of bodies, that is, sourcing that is not discriminatory, unjust or exploitative.

We share the serious ethical concerns outlined by lawyers, academics, ethicists and human rights campaigners in a recent open letter to the Australian Government,<sup>1</sup> this exhibition satisfies none of the established ethical norms and does not demonstrate respect for the person. This exhibition has already been banned by a number of countries and cities on ethical grounds including Israel<sup>2</sup>, France<sup>3</sup>, Hawaii<sup>4</sup> and Seattle.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> [https://endtransplantabuse.org/open-letter-urges-for-real-bodies-the-exhibition-to-be-closed-down/#\\_ftn3](https://endtransplantabuse.org/open-letter-urges-for-real-bodies-the-exhibition-to-be-closed-down/#_ftn3)

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.israelnationalnews.com/News/News.aspx/160245>

<sup>3</sup> <https://abcnews.go.com/Blotter/france-shuts-popular-bodies-show/story?id=7411070>

<sup>4</sup> <https://abcnews.go.com/Blotter/story?id=8072171&page=1>

<sup>5</sup> <https://www.seattlepi.com/local/article/Seattle-City-Council-bans-Bodies-exhibit-897239.php>

In addition, the New South Wales Ministry of Health states that bodies or human tissues sourced from international institutions must meet “the consent and other provisions of the NSW [Anatomy Act 1977](#)<sup>6</sup> and the relevant policy requirements outlined in [PD 2011\\_052 Conduct of Anatomical Examinations and Anatomy Licensing in NSW](#)”<sup>7</sup> including publicly displaying donor consent forms. However, the exhibition presenters themselves, Imagine Exhibitions, have confirmed that the display which comprises 20 preserved bodies and over 200 human organs, are sourced from China and are presented without any consent documents and identification papers to confirm the origins of the deceased.<sup>8</sup> In addition to presenting significant ethical concerns, the exhibition would appear to be clearly in breach of the NSW Ministry of Health’s own regulations.

On the basis of these significant ethical concerns, we call on the Australian and the New South Wales Governments to shut down “Real Bodies – The Exhibition” with immediate effect.

Should you require further information about this matter, please contact the RACP Ethics Committee via [Ethics@RACP.edu.au](mailto:Ethics@RACP.edu.au).

Yours sincerely



Associate Professor Mark Lane

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<sup>6</sup> Note: the relevant section of the NSW *Anatomy Act 1977* is Section 8A (1)

<sup>7</sup> NSW Ministry of Health website: <http://www.health.nsw.gov.au/humantissue/Pages/anatomy-laboratories.aspx#8>

<sup>8</sup> News.com.au (April 9, 2018), [‘Real Bodies: The Exhibition’, controversy about ‘disturbing’ origins of corpses](#)