

Media Release

Asylum-seekers must be transferred for safe care

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The Royal Australasian College of Physicians (RACP) is urging the Australian Government to immediately transfer asylum-seekers requiring treatments and other surgeries from Nauru to Australia for medical care.

It follows reports by *The Guardian* that up to 50 asylum seekers have had medical transfers refused or not considered despite medical advice.

“We are very concerned by reports that asylum-seekers are being refused medical transfers to hospitals in Australia where they would be able to get the care they need,” RACP President Dr Catherine Yelland said.

“The Australian Government has a responsibility to ensure people in detention have access to the same level of care in Australian hospitals.”

Dr Yelland reiterated the College’s position that indefinite, mandatory immigration detention must end and asylum-seekers should have community based placements while their claims are assessed.

“People held in detention face profound uncertainty, hopelessness and fear for their future, as well as often facing specific health issues,” Dr Yelland said.

“It’s abundantly clear that they can’t receive the quality health care they need in these facilities. Doctors’ advice in these instances must be followed. We’ve too often seen the tragic outcomes that can occur when this advice is ignored.

“We need to see an immediate end to mandatory detention and all asylum-seekers should be placed in communities until their claims are assessed. But until that happens, people in need of medical care and treatment must be able to access it.”

The [RACP’s Refugee and Asylum Seeker Health Position Statement](#) sets out a strong evidence based opposition to immigration detention, particularly of children, and the need to ensure access to quality health care. It has been endorsed by 14 medical colleges and peak health organisations across Australasia.

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About The Royal Australasian College of Physicians (RACP): The RACP trains, educates and advocates on behalf of more than 25,000 physicians and trainee physicians across Australia and New Zealand.

The College represents a broad range of medical specialties including general medicine, paediatrics and child health, cardiology, respiratory medicine, neurology, oncology, public health medicine, occupational and environmental medicine, palliative medicine, sexual health medicine, rehabilitation medicine, geriatric medicine and addiction medicine. Beyond the drive for medical excellence, the RACP is committed to developing health and social policies which bring vital improvements to the wellbeing of patients.

The College offers 60 training pathways. These lead to the award of one of seven qualifications that align with 45 specialist titles recognised by the Medical Board of Australia or allow for registration in nine vocational scopes with the Medical Council of New Zealand.