Physicians from the Royal Australasian College of Physicians (RACP) congratulate the heads of the Royal Commission on their thorough examination of conditions in youth detention in the Northern Territory.

RACP President Dr Catherine Yelland said jurisdictions must work together to ensure there is a strong and sustained commitment to working with Indigenous communities to implement the Royal Commission's recommendations.

"Throughout the Royal Commission's investigations, we have heard many heartbreaking stories of cruel and inhumane acts of abuse. We know that these acts did not occur in isolation in the Territory's juvenile justice facilities but happened across Australia more generally," Dr Yelland said.

"We strongly believe other State and Territory governments through the Council of Australian Governments (COAG) must now work together and ensure the Royal Commission's recommendations are acted on to improve the country’s approach to juvenile justice.

"We also believe that working in close partnership with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and their representative bodies, will be crucial to successfully implementing the Commission’s recommendations."

Dr Robert Tait, an RACP Fellow and specialist paediatrician at Royal Darwin Hospital, said there was still plenty of work to do in responding to victims of historical abuse and improving health outcomes for young people in the current system.

"The evidence shows childhood and adolescence experiences influence our life ‘trajectory’ and can result in adverse health, educational and vocational outcomes into adult life, with increased subsequent mortality and morbidity," Dr Tait explains. "This path can lead to inequity that is passed from one generation to the next.

"We ask that the Territory Government take an open and honest look at why Indigenous juveniles continue to be over-represented in detention and if its approach to juvenile justice gives young offenders an opportunity to rehabilitate and develop healthy behaviours for life.

"The Territory Government must consider a greater investment in paediatric services with a stronger focus on preventative strategies. This should include a tiered approach using culturally appropriate youth workers, mental health nurses, psychologists and psychiatrists, to help deliver the best possible care for young people."

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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.