

Media Release

RACP welcomes Gooda Royal Commission appointment and calls for health inclusion

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The Royal Australasian College of Physicians (RACP) has welcomed the announcement of an Indigenous Co-Commissioner on the Royal Commission, and said the terms of reference now needed to be broadened to include a health focus.

Well-respected Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander figure, Mr Mick Gooda was yesterday announced to co-chair the Royal Commission alongside former Queensland Supreme Court judge Margaret White.

Mr Gooda's presence is a welcome step with the Commission needing input from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and communities.

The RACP Paediatrics & Child Health Division President Sarah Dalton also highlighted the importance of including the health implications of incarceration as part of the Royal Commission into Child Protection and Youth Detention Systems.

"Adolescence is a critical time in a person's development. It's imperative that juvenile detention provides opportunities for young offenders to rehabilitate and develop healthy behaviours for life," explained Dr Dalton.

"The *Four Corners* program has revealed that this is clearly not happening. Many of the victims are now at risk of long-term physical and mental health problems.

"Paediatricians and adolescent medicine specialists are well placed to advise on the needs of children and young people in juvenile detention.

"It is important that the health impacts of incarceration be considered by the Royal Commission. The issues at Don Dale, and elsewhere, lead to significant health issues and these need to be fully identified as part of the Royal Commission process."

Dr Dalton also stated that the Royal Commission should cover all states and territories – not just the Northern Territory.

"Unfortunately these issues are not isolated. Reports of significant abuse in other Australian States and Territories confirms the need for a national focus," Dr Dalton added.

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About The Royal Australasian College of Physicians (RACP): The RACP trains, educates and advocates on behalf of more than 15,000 physicians and 7,500 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.