



The Royal Australasian
College of Physicians

Media Release

Health groups unite to call on the Government to release children from immigration detention

18 March 2015

The Royal Australasian College of Physicians (RACP) is one of 15 peak health bodies who have today released a [joint statement](#) calling for all children to be released from immigration detention.

“This is a strong and unified message of opposition to a policy which is inflicting serious and long lasting harm on children”, RACP President, Laureate Professor Nicholas Talley, said.

“The report of the Human Rights Commission’s Inquiry into children in detention was tabled in parliament over a month ago, but we are yet to see the Government acknowledge or act on any of the report’s recommendations.”

“There are still 240 children in detention¹, and every additional day they spend locked up is further damaging their health.”

Associate Professor Karen Zwi, the RACP’s representative to the Inquiry, saw first-hand the impact of detention on children as she visited detention centres in Australia and Christmas Island.

“The report is evidence of the devastating impact detention has on children.

“The government cannot continue to ignore the situation; it must immediately release all children and their families from detention facilities, both onshore and on Nauru immediately” A/Prof Zwi said.

The RACP is concerned that the Government’s response to the report has focused on attacking the integrity of the Human Rights Commission rather than acknowledging and dealing with the serious impact its policies are having on children.

The signatories to the statement are:

- Royal Australasian College of Physicians
- Royal Australian College of General Practitioners
- Royal Australian and New Zealand College of Psychiatrists
- Royal Australian and New Zealand College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists
- Australasian College for Emergency Medicine
- Australian Medical Association
- Australian Psychological Society
- Public Health Association of Australia
- Children’s Healthcare Australasia
- Australian Association of Social Workers

- Australian Medical Students for Refugee and Asylum Seeker Mental Health
- Australian College of Nursing
- Australian College of Mental Health Nurses
- Australian College of Midwives
- Maternal, Child and Family Health Nurses Australia



ⁱ <http://www.immi.gov.au/About/Documents/detention/immigration-detention-statistics-feb2015.pdf>

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About The Royal Australasian College of Physicians (RACP): The RACP trains, educates and advocates on behalf of more than 14,600 physicians – often referred to as medical specialists – and 6,000 Trainee members across Australia and New Zealand. The College represents more than 32 medical specialties including paediatrics & child health, cardiology, respiratory medicine, neurology, oncology and public health medicine, occupational & environmental medicine, palliative medicine, sexual health medicine, rehabilitation 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. www.racp.edu.au