

RACP: Government should heed the evidence

5 September 2017

This Royal Australasian College of Physicians statement is in response to comments that Social Services Minister Christian Porter made to Fairfax Media yesterday.

The following can be attributed to A/Prof Adrian Reynolds:

Testing 5,000 people for a small number of illicit drugs is not going to solve the problem that over 200,000 people with drug and alcohol addiction issues are not able to access treatment. We repeat our call that this is where the focus needs to be.

Conflating issues as different as childhood vaccination and addiction confuses two very distinct and very important public health issues.

An accurate summary of the RACP's position on the No Jab, No Pay issue is [available here](#).

The RACP's statement on the No Jab, No Pay issue was in the context that welfare penalties would not have any impact on, often wealthy, vaccine refusers. Our concern was that there needed to be more support for people who face practical, economic, social and geographic hurdles to getting their children vaccinated.

Addressing a problem such as addiction which is complex and deeply connected to many other issues including mental health, trauma and poverty, is very different to mechanisms to encourage people to undertake a single intervention such as an immunisation.

On the issue of the drug testing trial, the RACP stands by its submission and the view that we presented on public record.

Effective treatment for drug addiction needs to be in a collaborative and supportive model.

We urge the Government to take notice of the evidence in this space on what works and what doesn't work.

We encourage members of Parliament to reject this legislation when asked to vote on it.

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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.