

## Media Release

### RACP: make healthy housing the norm

Friday, 18 August 2017

The Royal Australasian College of Physicians (RACP) is calling for politicians to take urgent action to make 'healthy housing' the norm.

RACP New Zealand President Dr Jonathan Christiansen said that poverty-related hospitalisations and related health outcomes will persist until housing quality and availability are addressed.

"The voluntary Rental Warrant of Fitness scheme announced by University of Otago, Wellington and Wellington City Council is an encouraging initiative and we would like to see a compulsory scheme extended for all residential properties," said Dr Christiansen.

"We commend Mayor Justin Lester and his team for leading the charge to lift rental standards and improve the quality of housing stock, including council properties, in Wellington. We urge other local and national leaders to follow his example and make a residential warrant of fitness the norm."

The RACP's call for action includes introducing regulation to mandate a Warrant of Fitness and Health for residential dwellings so that landlords and property owners must address any dampness/mould issues, heating, fire safety, and security provisions.

"New Zealand homes, particularly rented homes, tend to be cold, damp, hard to ventilate and expensive to heat, resulting in children and adults being admitted to hospital for serious respiratory conditions, including pneumonia and bronchiolitis," said Dr Christiansen.

"The World Health Organization recommends indoor air temperatures be maintained at between 18-24°C. Temperatures below 16°C can worsen serious health conditions for our most vulnerable – including infants, young children, and older people."

To read the RACP's full statement visit <https://www.racp.edu.au/fellows/resources/new-zealand-resources/new-zealand-election-statement-2017>.

**Ends**

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The RACP trains physicians, often referred to as specialists, in more than 33 medical specialities

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](http://www.racp.edu.au)