

MEDIA RELEASE

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No time to play politics: RACP urges immediate transfer of all remaining children and their families from Nauru

The Royal Australasian College of Physicians (RACP) is urging the Australian Government to immediately transfer all remaining children and their families off Nauru, after new reports in the Daily Telegraph reveal 1 in 4 children on Nauru are suicidal.

“This morning’s reports are shocking, but they are entirely consistent with what I saw when I visited the Nauru detention centre in 2014, said Professor David Isaacs, Paediatrician and RACP Fellow.

“As doctors we have compelling evidence that detention and uncertainty have severe and damaging impacts on the health and wellbeing of people, particularly children.

“The situation now amounts to nothing short of a medical emergency.

“As a Paediatrician, it is my view that if our Government does not act now, there is a serious risk of death.

The RACP’s comments follow reports earlier this week that eleven children were transferred from Nauru to Australia, leaving fifty-two children behind in dire need of urgent specialist medical care.

“These children require immediate assessment in a specialist tertiary level child health facility, so that their medical, developmental and social-emotional (psychiatric) health can be readily addressed.

“Now is simply not the time for our leaders to be playing politics – all remaining kids and their families must be immediately transferred to Australia for specialist medical care.

“If a child presented to an Australian hospital or GP in a psychiatric state similar to the children on Nauru, they would be immediately assessed and closely monitored by a specialist team of medical professionals.

The latest revelations from Nauru follow a confirmation by Dr Gogna, the Chief Medical Officer for the Department of Home Affairs and Surgeon General of the Australian Border Force in Senate Estimates this week that there are no tertiary paediatric facilities on Nauru.

There are children in Australia’s care who are at imminent risk of dying. We need to bring these children to safety immediately,” said Professor Isaacs.

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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 trainees and 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 61 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.