FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Nurses condemn new “lock-up” security measures to mental health inpatient facilities in Queensland

The introduction of ‘lock-up’ security measures and the wider use of ankle bracelets to address absconding within Queensland’s 16 mental health hospital inpatient facilities, is a shared concern for the Australian College of Nursing (ACN) and the Australian College of Mental Health Nurses (ACMHN).

Adjunct Professor Debra Thoms, ACN CEO, voiced her support for ACMHN’s stance that this policy implementation perpetuates a false and negative stigma attached to mental health.

“These new measures are contrary to nurses and other health professionals’ efforts to encourage those with a mental illness to live their best lives. Safety is vital; however, this drastic action does not take into account the individual and circumstantial nature of mental health issues.

“The Queensland Government has the opportunity here to research absconding and endeavour to provide interventions for those in our communities who are most vulnerable,” said Adjunct Professor Thoms.

The new ‘lock-up’ policy was to come into effect 15 December 2013.

ACN calls upon Dr Michael Cleary, Queensland Health’s Deputy Director-General, to reverse this decision. Additionally, ACN urges the Deputy Director-General to consult with mental health units regarding the action being taken when addressing incidents of absconding, and look to provide a compassionate and adequately funded mental health system.

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For interviews with Adjunct Professor Thoms, please contact Diana Spencer or Felicity Zadro on 029212 7867 or diana@zadrocommunications.com.au