

29 July 2016

Australian College of Nursing condemns mistreatment of youth detainees in the Northern Territory

The Australian College of Nursing (ACN) is appalled by Monday night's *Four Corners* exposé of the Don Dale Youth Detention Centre in Darwin which showed the shocking mistreatment of children in juvenile detention. The use of tear gas, physical violence and solitary confinement are sickening occurrences that should never happen in Australia.

ACN is pleased to hear of the establishment of a Royal Commission. ACN hopes to see answers and solutions in a timely fashion in response to this deplorable treatment. Children incarcerated in Australia remain at risk and deserve immediate access to care.

As a member of the International Council of Nurses, ACN endorses the United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights 1948, the Geneva Convention of 1949 and the United Nations Basic Principles for the Treatment of Prisoners.

ACN's CEO, Adjunct Professor Kylie Ward FACN said, "Nurses must advocate for the safe and humane care of detainees, including those in youth juvenile detention centres. The Nursing and Midwifery Board of Australia's Code of Ethics for Nurses explicitly respects the human rights for all people. Nurses who are aware of mistreatment are obligated to take the necessary safeguards to ensure the protection of detainees."

"ACN also has grave concerns regarding the moral and ethical rights and reporting obligations of health care professionals providing care in the detention setting," she said.

The Optional Protocol to the Convention Against Torture (OPCAT), already available to the government, is able to monitor all places of detention in Australia, including youth detention facilities. ACN believes this is a necessary initiative which the Australian Government should adopt.

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Adjunct Professor Kylie Ward, CEO of ACN.



Australian
College of
Nursing

Advancing nurse leadership

Notes to the Editors:

The Australian College of Nursing (ACN) is the national professional organisation for all nurse leaders and its aim is to ensure that the Australian community receives quality nursing care now and in the future. ACN is a membership organisation with members in all states and territories, health care settings and nursing specialties. ACN is also the Australian member of the International Council of Nurses headquartered in Geneva.

ACN, an organisation not afraid to intelligently challenge industry issues affecting the nursing profession or Australia's health care, is a well-connected and educated national body that drives change with people of influence to enhance the delivery of health services to the Australian community. ACN advances the skills and expertise of nurses to provide leadership in their contribution to the policy, practice and delivery of health care.

A membership organisation with members in all states and territories, health care settings and nursing specialities, ACN's membership includes many nurses in roles of influence, including senior nurses, organisational leaders, academics and researchers.

What is the role of ACN to media?

- ACN provides trusted, well supported information about Australia's health care system, the delivery of health care, nursing leadership and the nursing profession.
- ACN has a number of media-savvy spokespeople within the organisation who can comment on Australia's health care system, the delivery of health care, nursing leadership and the nursing profession.
- ACN offers media with an alternative voice to that of an industrial relations perspective.
- ACN is in-the-know and can comment on health care matters of interest.
- ACN can respond to media requests in a timely manner and with subject/clinical expert's available on-hand for further discussion.
- ACN regularly responds to government updates pertaining to Australia's health care system.

What role does ACN play?

ACN is here to act and deliver results as agents of change. They are working towards a brighter future through advancing nurse leadership to enhance the delivery of health care to all. The organisation provides nurse leaders with access to relevant information, support and education that will enhance Australia's reputation on the world stage.

Social media channels:

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/acnursing>

Twitter: https://twitter.com/acn_tweet

LinkedIn: <http://www.linkedin.com/company/australian-college-of-nursing>

Instagram: https://www.instagram.com/acn_nursing