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## MEDIA RELEASE

### LEADING HEALTH ORGANISATIONS DEMAND IMMEDIATE ACTION ON MENTAL HEALTH STANDARDS IN IMMIGRATION DETENTION

Over 30 key health and mental health organisations and mental health advocates are demanding the Government urgently review the standards of mental health care in all immigration detention centres.

This issue is urgent and action needs to be taken now. The mental health of immigration detainees can't wait until the political debate over the appropriateness of immigration detention has been resolved.

Every person has the right to be treated with dignity and respect, to have decent living conditions, and freedom to communicate with their family, lawyers and friends. The Government must act now to make the changes to the living conditions and freedoms that will improve the mental health and wellbeing of people in detention.

Detainees have the right to mental health care commensurate with their need. The Government's own National Practice Standards for the Mental Health Workforce should apply to detention centre staff. Mental health professionals need to be able to work within the same standards that protect everyone in Australia to ensure that the care they provide to detainees is effective and safe.

In early October a report from the Australian Human Rights Commission was released, which raised serious questions about the mental health impacts of indefinite detention on people being held at the Curtin Immigration Detention Centre.

There are genuine concerns that the Government is not providing adequate mental health care to people in detention centres at a time when incidents of self-harm and suicide have increased, and riots, protests, and hunger strikes have become common.

It is clear that conditions inside detention centres are unacceptable. Children are especially vulnerable. The mental health crisis in the immigration detention system is rapidly worsening and these conditions cannot be allowed to continue.

The Government must immediately launch an independent investigation into the standards of mental health care in Australia's immigration detention centres.

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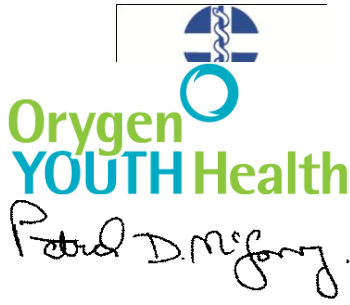
**This statement is supported by:**

- Australian College of Mental Health Nurses
- Australian Nursing Federation (ANF)
- Australian Medical Association (AMA)
- Royal Australian & New Zealand College of Psychiatrists (RANZCP)
- Mental Health Council of Australia (MHCA)
- Brain & Mind Research Institute (Prof Ian Hickie)

- Orygen Young Health (Prof Pat McGorry)
- National Mental Health Consumer & Carer Forum (NMHCCF)
- Australian Psychological Society (APS)
- ConNetica (Prof John Mendoza)
- SANE Australia
- Professor Louise Newman
- Royal College of Nursing Australia
- Lifeline Australia
- Australian College of Psychological Medicine
- Mental Health Research Institute
- Catholic Social Services Australia
- The Mental Health Association of Central Australia
- ACT Mental Health Consumer Network
- Mental Illness Fellowship of Australia
- Mental Illness Fellowship NQ
- Multicultural Mental Health Association of Australia
- GROW
- Crisis Support Services
- Neami Limited
- Norwood Association Inc
- Alcohol and Other Drugs Council of Australia
- Queensland Voice for Mental Health
- Australian Association of Social Workers
- Reconnexion
- The Royal Australian College of General Practitioners
- Carers Australia
- Suicide Prevention Australia



Mental Health Council of Australia



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