



Association for the Welfare of Child Health

MEDIA RELEASE

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THE ASSOCIATION FOR THE WELFARE OF CHILD HEALTH CALLS UPON THE AUSTRALIAN GOVERNMENT TO ACT EXPEDITIOUSLY TO REVIEW THE HEALTH CARE NEEDS OF CHILDREN BEING HELD IN AUSTRALIAN DETENTION CENTRES.

The Association for the Welfare of Child Health (AWCH) is concerned about the emotional, social, intellectual and physical development of children being held in detention and the long term impact on the children and their families.

It has been reported that children in detention centres in Australia have suffered from bedwetting, nightmares, have impaired memory and are becoming socially withdrawn.

“If a child’s normal development is interrupted by their circumstances and no provision is made to improve that situation, then it is well known and accepted that there will be future problems. AWCH has been concerned about the health care needs of these and other ‘Children on the Margin’, who will be the focus of the AWCH National Conference to be held in Sydney 11-12 October 2001,” said Mrs Irene Hancock, AWCH National President.

The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child was ratified by Australia on the 17 December 1990 and it entered into force for Australia on 16 January 1991. Under Article 22 Australia is obliged to ensure a child seeking refugee status, “receives appropriate protection and humanitarian assistance in the enjoyment of applicable rights set forth in the present Convention and in other international rights or humanitarian instruments” to which Australia is party.

AWCH, therefore, urges much earlier release of families with children to avoid further deterioration of the children’s health and well being.

The Australian Association for the Welfare of Child Health (AWCH) is a national organisation of concerned parents and professionals advocating for the needs of children, adolescents and their families within hospitals and the health care system in Australia. AWCH advocates a holistic family oriented approach to the care of children, acknowledging the vital role the whole family plays in a child’s wellbeing.

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