

MEDIA RELEASE

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AWCH AND THE AUSTRALIAN CONFEDERATION OF PAEDIATRIC AND CHILD HEALTH NURSES CALL FOR THE RELEASE OF ALL CHILDREN AND FAMILIES FROM DETENTION BY 10 JUNE AND THAT AUSTRALIA ADOPTS A POLICY OF A MORE FLEXIBLE DETENTION REGIME WHICH FORBIDS DETENTION OF CHILDREN FOR MORE THAN A FEW DAYS

With the publication of *A last resort?* the Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission's report of its National Inquiry into Children in Immigration Detention, the Association for the Welfare of Child Health (AWCH) and the Australian Confederation of Paediatric and Child Health Nurses (ACPCHN) remain concerned about the emotional, social, intellectual and physical development of children still being held in detention and the long term impact on the children and their families.

The Inquiry has found that Australia's immigration detention policy has failed to protect the mental health of children, failed to provide adequate health care and education and failed to protect unaccompanied children and those with disabilities. The Inquiry also found that the mandatory detention system breached the *UN Convention on the Rights of the Child*.

AWCH and ACPCHN call for the Australian Government to immediately release children with their families from immigration detention to ensure that any 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.

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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ACPCHN is a national organisation of nurses with a vision to promote excellence in the health care of children and young people, in the context of their family, through professional support of paediatric and child health nurses and any nurses working with children and young people.

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