

# Letter from parent

*Our daughter recently underwent extensive surgery at hospital. After surgery she was admitted to the paediatric ward as expected.*

*Today my husband was asked if our daughter could be moved to an adult ward. We refused this request for a number of reasons and our daughter remains in the paediatric ward.*

*However, I am distressed we were asked and am concerned for other parents and children who may not realize the implications of placing a child in an adult ward.*

*The psycho-social needs of children and adults are vastly different and children in adult wards have been shown to be at increased risk of trauma associated with sights and sounds in adult wards. In addition to this there is an increased risk to the child of physical, psychological or sexual harm.*

*Due to the nature of the procedure our daughter will require a lengthy stay in hospital and needs the social interaction of other children, access to play spaces, leisure and education, all of which have been shown to aid a child's recovery and provide minimal interruption to their development and none of which are available in an adult ward. Nurses trained in the care of adult patients may not be trained in paediatric care (which is why we have paediatric wards) and the results of this for children can, and have been, catastrophic.*

*Professor David Bennett AO FRACP, an adolescent health physician and President of the Association for the Wellbeing of Children in Healthcare (AWCH) has written on this very subject and I am surprised and disappointed to realize his wealth of knowledge on this subject does not appear to have made it to the Hospital staff. If you would like discuss the range of negative implications for children placed in adult wards Professor Bennett can be contacted via the AWCH on (02) 9817 2439.*

*Luckily for our daughter we have no hesitation in speaking up to defend her right to be protected from harm. However, other parents may not be aware of the risks to their child or may be less confident about voicing their concerns.*

*It is unfair to parents to put them in such a position and unfair and unethical to children to place them in potentially traumatizing environments, give them less than optimal care and expose them to unacceptable levels of risk.*

*I am writing to request that no other parent be asked to move their child to an adult ward. I would like an assurance that other parents and their children will not be exposed to such duress in the future.*