MEDIA RELEASE

Detention Centre sacking outrageous

The Australian College of Mental Health Nurses is outraged that a mental health nurse has been sacked by International Health and Medical Service after expressing her opinion on mandatory detention and mental health.

Adjunct Associate Professor Kim Ryan, CEO of the College said “It is shameful to think that in this day and age a professional has been sacked after expressing an opinion on public policy which directly affects the environment they work in.”

“Mental health nurses provide services to people in many difficult and unfortunate circumstances. Whether they work in a detention centre, a hospital or in the community, a Mental Health Nurse has to look at their clients’ circumstances and consider how they impact on their mental health. It is their professional duty to do so” she said.

“The opinion this Mental Health Nurse expressed is based on the strong evidence showing that mandatory detention contributes to mental illness” said Adjunct Associate Professor Ryan.

A Senate Inquiry into mandatory detention has revealed an explosion in self-harm and starvation among detainees. The head of the Immigration Department, Andrew Metcalfe questioned the policy of mandatory detention as part of his opening address to the inquiry.

Documents submitted to the Inquiry by the Department show that 213 detainees were treated for self-inflicted injuries and 700 for ‘voluntary starvation’ in the first six months of this year, as part of a system that now costs $772 million a year to maintain.

“It is concerning that despite the size of the mental health issues in detention centres, International Health and Medical Service is more concerned about the policy than the person.” said Adjunct Associate Professor Ryan.


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The Australian College of Mental Health Nurses is the professional body representing mental health nurses in Australia.
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