JOINT MEDIA STATEMENT

Australia’s health groups call for Australian Border Force Act to be amended

Australia’s peak health professional bodies are voicing collective concern about the appalling secrecy provisions in the Australian Border Force Act 2015 which threaten jail for up to two years for health and medical professional who disclose information about the conditions in immigration Detention Centres.

This law actively restricts health professionals from fulfilling their duty to advocate for the best possible patient care.

Restricting our ability to speak out about conditions in detention, and threatening us with imprisonment for up to two years is a direct attack on our ability to work for the health and protection of our patients.

Urgent amendments must be made to this Act to ensure protections for health professional and all contractors to speak freely in support of the need for best practice care and against harmful conditions or practices which may impact on those detained.

As organisations representing Australia’s health professionals, it is inconceivable to us that the Government should seek to gag our ability to advocate strongly for our patients. Changes must be passed immediately.

Co-signed by:

- The Royal Australasian College of Physicians
- The Royal Australian College of General Practitioners
- The Royal Australian and New Zealand College of Psychiatrists
- Australasian Society of Infectious Diseases
- Public Health Association of Australia
- Australasian College for Emergency Medicine
- Australian Psychological Society
- Australian Medical Students Association
- Australian College of Nursing
- Australian College of Midwives
- Australian College of Mental Health Nurses
- Australian Association of Social Workers