

Australian Medical Association Limited
ABN 37 008 426 793

42 Macquarie Street, Barton ACT 2600: PO Box 6090, Kingston ACT 2604
 Telephone: (02) 6270 5400 Facsimile (02) 6270 5499
 Website : <http://www.ama.com.au/>



**‘NAURU FILES’ EXPOSE NEED FOR INDEPENDENT ASSESSMENT
 OF HEALTH OF ASYLUM SEEKERS**

AMA President, Dr Michael Gannon, said today that the AMA wants independent investigation and assessment of health and living conditions for asylum seekers in offshore detention, following damning reports published in *The Guardian*.

Dr Gannon said that the reports of abuse, trauma, self-harm, sexual assault, inadequate health services, and deplorable living conditions for asylum seekers, especially children, demand urgent action from the Government.

“These disturbing reports echo long-held concerns by the AMA about the lack of proper physical and mental health care being provided to people in immigration detention,” Dr Gannon said.

“The reports detail high levels of trauma and mental illness, especially in children being detained on Nauru.

“Having children in detention is harmful - it causes physical, psychological, emotional, and developmental harms.

“The AMA has called for all children to be removed from detention facilities and placed into the community, where they can be properly cared for.”

Dr Gannon said that the AMA regularly receives reports from asylum seekers and their advocates – from within and outside the medical profession – detailing failures to provide proper physical and mental health treatment and services for asylum seekers.

“The AMA believes doctors must be able to speak out on these issues without fear of retribution or prosecution.

“We need greater transparency and we need more clinical input to policies regarding the health of asylum seekers.”

The AMA wants the Government to establish a transparent, national statutory body of clinical experts, independent of Government, with the power to investigate and report to the Parliament on the health and welfare of asylum seekers and refugees in Australia and in offshore detention.

“The AMA’s position is clear - people who are seeking, or who have been granted, asylum within Australia have the right to receive appropriate medical care without discrimination, regardless of citizenship, visa status, or ability to pay,” Dr Gannon said.

“Asylum seekers and refugees under the protection of the Australian Government should be treated with compassion, respect, and dignity.”

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CONTACT: John Flannery

02 6270 5477 / 0419 494 761