



Australia's Peak Mental Health Body calls for Transparency in Decision relating to the Mental Health of Detainees at Woomera

Australia's peak mental health body the *Mental Health Council of Australia* which recently received a high commendation award from the Human Rights Commissioner, announced its concerns of the ongoing reporting of inadequate support for the mental and physical health of detainees at the Woomera Immigration Detention Centre.

Mr John McGrath, Chair of the Council stated:

'The very fact that this matter remains unresolved is a serious concern. The Council calls on the Government to ensure it meets its international obligations as good world citizens and as members of the United Nations and implements immediate measures to provide mental and physical health support to detainees.'

'The Council does not condone acts of self-harm or violence taken by detainees at Woomera Detention Centre or elsewhere but the desperate nature for detainees to undertake such action reflects the gravity of the situation.'

The Mental Health Council of Australia which represents all major stakeholders within the Australian mental health sector including consumers, carers, health professional and cultural groups has been a strong supporter of the Governments Immigration Detention Advisory Group established by Minister Ruddock early last year. The Council remains concerned however that this groups advice to the Minister is not being accepted nor available publicly.

'The Australian public needs to be informed of the advice the Advisory Group is providing to the Minister. The absence of this disclosure is fuelling speculation that the Minister is not acting on advice provided by professions with expertise in this area' stated Mr McGrath.

Mr McGrath also announced the Council's support for the Human Rights Commission's investigation into the conditions of children at the Woomera Immigration Detention Centre.