



Aboriginal Health Council
of South Australia Inc.

'Our health, our choice, our way.'

For immediate release.

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SA's Aboriginal Health Council calls for greater consultation in wake of NT detention scandal

The Aboriginal Health Council of South Australia Inc. (AHCSA) today called for greater consultation with the Aboriginal community controlled health services sector in light of concerns over the welfare and treatment of young Aboriginal people in detention in the Northern Territory, many of whom have links to communities based in South Australia.

AHCSA Chairperson John Singer said he welcomed the Royal Commission called by the Prime Minister and the recent appointment of two royal commissioners to head the inquiry, including a highly respected Indigenous leader.

However, Mr Singer said it was important the process included wider consultation with Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Services, including AHCSA, because their members were often at the frontline helping to provide crisis services and care for at-risk youth in remote locations, including the APY Lands.

Mr Singer said the alleged treatment of young people in detention, as exposed by the ABC's *Four Corners* report, was abhorrent and a disgrace to the nation.

"The fact that this treatment has happened in Australia in this day and age is both shocking and unacceptable, and has no place in our society.

"As the peak body representing the Aboriginal community controlled health sector in South Australia, AHCSA is concerned not only with the physical well-being of these young people, but also their overall social, emotional and cultural welfare."

"It's important to have an Aboriginal voice in the review, not only to examine the treatment of young people in these individual cases, but also to look at the way in which youth justice and detention systems function generally, both in the Northern Territory and elsewhere."

While there has been no suggestion that the kind of treatment reported to be occurring in the Northern Territory extends to other States and Territories, Mr Singer suggested greater involvement by the Aboriginal health sector could assist to safeguard against this kind of treatment ever happening elsewhere.

"We invite all levels of government, including the South Australian Government, to speak with us, and our members, so we can all help to ensure this treatment will never happen here or

elsewhere in Australia. It's important we all work together to improve outcomes for young offenders."

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