

NURSES MUST BE SUPPORTED IN MAINTAINING PROFESSIONAL STANDARDS

Nurses working with detainees and asylum seekers must be supported in maintaining their professional standards regardless of the environments in which they work, according to Royal College of Nursing, *Australia*.

Acting CEO, Kathleen McLaughlin said nurses working with detainees and asylum seekers have a number of ethical issues that confront them on a daily basis. “The environment itself, the sense of professional isolation often experienced, and the complex health needs of those in their care can present great challenges to nurses.

“Detention policies and protocols should never compromise the health care of a detainee. Nor should health professionals ever be requested to undertake detention procedures.

“Nurses and midwives should not be requested by any authority to perform procedures, investigations or any other practices that would breach their professional standards.

“For example, nurses and midwives should not contribute to the responsibilities of security roles, such as security-related body searches” she said.

The health status and care requirements of asylum seekers and detainees are the priority for nurses and must not be compromised by other factors.

What is needed urgently is increased funding for nurses for accessible education in:

- assessment, identification, and care management of victims of torture or other trauma
- knowledge of mental, physical, developmental and emotional needs of families and children
- ability to recognise and manage particular health conditions that may be more prevalent in countries other than Australia
- understanding of cultural and linguistic backgrounds to achieve appropriate provision of health care

“Nurses must be supported in the care they provide,” she said.

Royal College of Nursing, Australia (RCNA) is Australia’s peak professional nursing organisation and is the Australian member of the International Council of Nurses. RCNA is a national membership organisation open to nurses and nursing students in all areas of the profession.