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**ALHR says Comply with our International Human Rights Obligations to  
Prevent More Tragedy in our Watchhouses**

The President of Australian Lawyers for Human Rights ("ALHR"), Stephen Keim, today called for greater oversight and monitoring of all places of detention in accordance with international human rights standards, after a recent Aboriginal death in custody was caused by NT Police "lack of care".

The NT Coroner delivered his findings in Alice Springs, yesterday, after an inquest into the death of Kwementyaye Briscoe, a 27 year old Aboriginal man, who was taken into protective custody for being intoxicated in January 2012. The Coroner found extensive police errors and that the "death was preventable and should not have occurred."<sup>1</sup>

Mr Keim said today, "It is this kind of preventable tragedy that urges us to question why Australia continues to fall behind the global standards set out in the Optional Protocol to the Convention Against Torture (OPCAT). OPCAT aims to promote humane conditions of detention and prevent these human rights abuses from occurring."

Australia is yet to ratify or implement OPCAT after signing the instrument in 2009.

Mr Keim asked, "How many more Aboriginal deaths in custody will it take before the Australian Government takes these issues seriously? More than 20 years since the Royal Commission into Aboriginal Deaths in Custody, surely, the time to act is now."

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<sup>1</sup> 'Lack of care' by NT Police led to death in custody, Allyson Horn and Ruby Jones,  
<http://www.abc.net.au/news/2012-09-17/lack-of-care-by-nt-police-led-to-death-in-custody/4264934>

Mr Keim urged “the Australian Government to ratify and implement the OPCAT provisions as a matter of urgency, while the Northern Territory Government needs to implement the recommendations of the Royal Commission into Aboriginal Deaths in Custody to ensure that this preventable tragedy will not occur again”.

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ALHR (Australian Lawyers for Human Rights) is a network of Australian lawyers active in practising and promoting awareness of international human rights standards in Australia. ALHR has a national membership of over 2000 people, with active National, State and Territory committees.