

Document Title: WPA Section of Psychiatry, Law and Ethics Symposium
Document Type: Symposium summary
Author: Prof Neeraj Gill
Date Created: 31 May 2021



**WPA Section on Psychiatry, Law and Ethics symposium
World Congress of Psychiatry, 2021, Bangkok (Virtual Congress)**

Law and ethics of compulsory psychiatric treatment with special focus on Indigenous populations

Chair – Prof Neeraj S Gill, Australia

Speakers:

Prof Neeraj S Gill, Australia

Dr Kiri Prentice, New Zealand

Dr Andrew Howie, New Zealand

This symposium will discuss the mental health acts in New Zealand and Queensland, Australia as case studies for human rights impact of legislation, with a special focus on Indigenous populations.

The legislation for compulsory treatment of mental illness in New Zealand was criticised for violating human rights principles of the United Nations. The Ministry of Health surveyed mental health and addiction assessment/treatment practices, and found shortcomings in a number of areas. More recent legislation (Substance Abuse Compulsory Assessment and Treatment Act 2017) has sought to remedy those shortcomings. This symposium will survey compliance with human rights in the mental health and addictions sector in New Zealand and consider its main proposals.

Queensland, Australia revised its mental health act in 2016 and introduced a number of less restrictive options for treatment. However, preliminary data suggests that the compulsory treatment is on the rise. The possible reasons behind this un-intended consequence of legislative change will be discussed.

The Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in Australia and Maori people in New Zealand are overrepresented in mental health conditions, addictions, incarceration, and other adverse social statistics. These indicators are rooted in historical issues e.g. dispossession and stolen generations, as well as ongoing socio-economic marginalisation of Indigenous people. The symposium will consider the initiatives being undertaken, by the New Zealand Ministry of Health to reduce the rate of Maori people under Compulsory Treatment Orders. Australian Government 'Close The Gap' plan will be discussed, to highlight the need for strategic direction, rather than empty rhetoric.