



New South Wales
Council for
Civil Liberties

NSW COUNCIL FOR CIVIL LIBERTIES

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MEDIA RELEASE

Physical Restraints Used Against Aboriginal People

This week, Aboriginal man, Eric Whittaker died in a Sydney hospital while in police custody. As he lay bedridden, he was placed in leg chains by police. [This](#) was the scene that greeted Mr Whittaker's grieving relatives who came to visit their loved one during his final hours. The family were understandably appalled and insulted by this final indignity. The NSW CCL stands united with the family of the deceased in its condemnation of this corporal treatment which is vividly reminiscent of 19th Century colonial policing practice in this country.

The incident follows [recent revelations](#) that Aboriginal children were regularly restrained in the Northern Territory's notorious, Don Dale Juvenile Centre, by the use of chemical injections. Referred to by prison authorities as, the 'settlement needle', the use of these restraints against children has been linked to developmental difficulties in children, including poor cognitive and neurological functioning and hormonal imbalances. A further side effect is suicidal ideation. Given existing rates of youth suicide in Aboriginal communities, the use of these chemicals against Aboriginal people, (against their will) is alarming to say the least. The NSW CCL condemns this practice.

Accordingly, the NSWCCL calls on both the NSW Police and the Northern Territory Department of Correctional Services to cease these damaging practices of corporal restraint against Aboriginal people immediately.

NSW Council for Civil Liberties
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