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**Transcript:** AMA President, Dr Michael Gannon, *ABC News Breakfast*, Tuesday 7 November 2017

**Subject:** Asylum seekers on Manus Island

**VIRGINIA TRIOLI:** It's been one week now since the scheduled date for the closure of the Manus Island Detention Centre. But there's around 600 men still there, refusing to move. Local lawyers for the detainees have sought an injunction from PNG Supreme Court which would compel the Government to reconnect services and to provide food and security for them.

**MICHAEL ROWLAND:** The Australian Medical Association says it has grave concerns about the health and wellbeing of those on Manus, and AMA President, Dr Michael Gannon, joins us from Perth now. It's very early over there so really appreciate your time. Michael Gannon, firstly, what are you hearing from the doctors on the ground there about the medical condition of these men?

**MICHAEL GANNON:** Well, we're not hearing a great deal from doctors and it's very, very difficult to get a true picture of what is going on. What we've been calling for, for some time now, is transparency about the arrangements for these men. We had something along those lines previously, had a good relationship with Dr John Brayley, the Chief Medical Officer of the Department of Immigration and Border Protection, that's one of the things we're calling for is a better idea of exactly what is going on.

**MICHAEL ROWLAND:** So what fears do you have if, as we're learning ourselves and we ourselves are only relying on very scant information because of the information controls on the island, if those men are forced to stay or stay by their own choice in this detention centre now without power, food, and water supplies?

**MICHAEL GANNON:** Well, we're concerned about both physical and mental aspects of the health of these wretched souls who are stuck in a bigger political game. They have great uncertainty in their lives, they have done for years, and we're hearing unverified reports about reduced access to medication. Some medications as you know need to be refrigerated. We hear different reports about the quality of what's available in the alternative accommodations being set up elsewhere on the island.

What we want is independent verification of the living standards of these men. That's the only thing that doctors can possibly call for, is appropriate health care standards for a group of people who, although they're not Australian citizens, are entitled to protection under Australian law.

**MICHAEL ROWLAND:** But there has been a private company set up and the Government insists it is ready to provide both primary health care and primary mental health care to these men at this alternative detention centre away from the current one. So shouldn't it be the case of the detainees simply going to that new one?

**MICHAEL GANNON:** Well, I think what we need is an independent look at the truth of what is going on, and I think that the secrecy doesn't assist the Government's case. If it is the case that appropriate facilities are available elsewhere on the island to take care of the mental and physical health needs of these men while they await resettlement - whether that's under the

