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From the President

11 June 2021

The Hon Karen Andrews MP
Minister for Home Affairs
P O Box 6022
Parliament House
CANBERRA ACT 2600

Via Email:

Dear Minister

Open letter – Doctors call on the Australian Government to immediately release Biloea Family from detention

We call on the Australian Government to immediately release Tharnicaa, Kopika, Priya and Nades Murugappan from immigration detention.

We are extremely concerned that this family has been held in indefinite detention for more than 1000 days; on Christmas Island since August 2019 and in mainland Australia prior to that from March 2018. This is most of the youngest child, Tharnicaa's, life.

Being held in detention presents an extreme and unacceptable risk to children's health, development and mental health. These risks are particularly high for infants and toddlers. If detention is prolonged, the consequences may be long term or permanent.

Immigration detention is harmful to the physical and mental health of people of all ages.

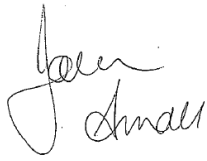
As medical experts, we believe that immigration detention is not an environment in which children can thrive and it is not appropriate to continue to hold children in detention.

We also do not support family separation, which has a profound psychological impact. We support the right to family integrity and urge you to reunite the family immediately and release them from immigration detention.

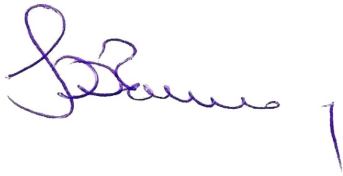
In addition to all the reasons provided above for ending the detention of this family, evidence provided to Senate Estimates details that the cost to Australian taxpayers of detaining this family on Christmas Island was \$6.7 million between August 2019 and January 2021. This is an enormous and unjustifiable financial cost, borne by the Australian community.

It is time for the Government to release the Biloea family from immigration detention, as a renewed sign of compassionate and humane Australian leadership.

Yours sincerely



Dr Jacqueline Small
President-Elect and Acting President
The Royal Australasian College of Physicians



Dr John Bonning
President,
Australasian College for Emergency Medicine (ACEM)



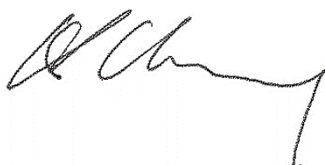
Dr Sarah Chalmers
President,
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Dr Vanessa Beavis
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Karen Booth
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Dr Mary Pinder
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Dr Vijay Roach
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Royal Australian and New Zealand College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists
(RANZCOG)



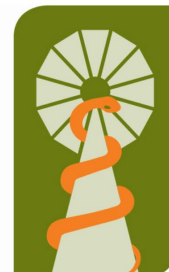
Associate Professor Vinay Lakra
President,
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for Emergency Medicine

Australian College of
Rural & Remote Medicine

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