



**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: [Karen.Andrews.MP@aph.gov.au](mailto:Karen.Andrews.MP@aph.gov.au)

Dear Minister

**Open letter – Doctors call on the Australian Government to immediately release Biloela 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.

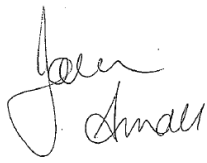
As medical experts, we believe that immigration detention is not an environment in which children can thrive and it is not appropriate to continue to hold children in detention.

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 Biloela 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)



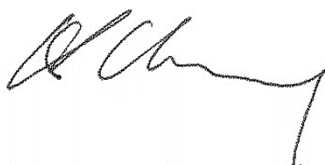
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Dr Vanessa Beavis  
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Karen Booth  
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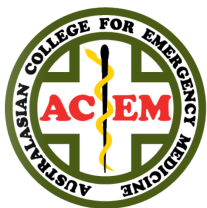
Dr Mary Pinder  
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