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7000 doctors call to resettle Murugappan family

The Australian Medical Association (AMA) has called on the Federal Government to resettle the Murugappan family permanently into the Australian community, following Minister Hawke’s decision to allow the father and sister to be reunited with the mother and ill daughter in Perth.

AMA President Omar Khorshid said the AMA had been campaigning for the release of the two Australian born children and their parents amid grave concerns about the impacts of prolonged indefinite detention on Christmas Island on the children’s development.

The AMA has collected more than 7000 signatures from doctors calling for the release of the Australian-born sisters and their parents from Christmas Island detention.

“While we welcome the decision of Immigration Minister Alex Hawke to allow the family to live in community detention in Perth, we call on the Minister to immediately exercise his discretion to resolve this issue once and for all by allowing the family to settle in Australia.

“The Australian Government has discretionary power to permanently settle the family. It has dragged on for three years and the Australian-born children have lost their early childhood years to immigration detention. This provides enough justification for a compassionate approach despite fact that the parents have not been able to prove their refugee status.

“Doctors are very concerned about the harm being caused to the two young girls, Tharunicaa and Kopika, by being in detention since August 2019 at such a crucial time in their development.”

Dr Khorshid said the Murugappan children, who were born in Australia, had had been deprived of basic freedoms of childhood as the result of the Australian Government’s policy.

The AMA has grave concerns about the mental health and wellbeing of all refugees and asylum seekers who are in detention in onshore and offshore immigration detention centres.

It has called for the release of these refugees and asylum seekers into the community while they wait for a final determination on their status.

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