



# Anglican Church of Australia

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**16 June 2021**

**To:** The Minister for Immigration, the Hon Alex Hawke MP  
The Prime Minister, the Hon Scott Morrison MP  
The Minister for Home Affairs, the Hon Karen Andrews MP  
The Deputy Prime Minister, the Hon Michael McCormack MP

CC. The Hon Anthony Albanese

**Re: Bring Nades and Priya and their girls home to Biloela where they belong**

Biloela is a powerful story of a small rural town with a big heart, which has welcomed a courageous young family seeking peace, freedom, safety and stability.

As Christian leaders, we write to each of you welcoming your government's decision to release Nades and Priya and their daughters, Kopika and Tharnicaa, from immigration detention – but only as the first step to bringing the family back home to Biloela where they clearly belong. This young family has become an integral part of the tight-knit Biloela community, where they volunteered, worked, participated in church groups and built close friendships for nearly four years.

However, in March 2018, your government chose to detain this young family, first in Melbourne and then on Christmas Island, after they were forced from their Biloela home by armed government officers in a dawn raid.

Forcibly returning Nades and Priya to Sri Lanka was, and remains, an unsafe option, as abduction, torture, unlawful detention and sexual violence of Tamils at the hands of Sri Lankan security forces continue to be reported.

Every parent has the right to build a life with their children in safety and with a measure of certainty about their future. After spending well over three years in immigration detention, Nades and Priya, along with their young girls, need stability to rebuild their lives. Granting the family visas and allowing their return to Biloela will enable them to do so.

Robust studies show that detaining children severely impacts their mental, emotional and physical health long-term. Returning these young girls to their home town of Biloela, where they are cherished by people they know, will enable the healing process to commence following the trauma caused by several years of immigration detention.

We are told that Nades wants to return to his job in Biloela to support his young family, which he cannot do while the family is forced into community detention. Priya wants to enrol Kopika at Biloela State School to continue her education. And, the Biloela community wants to make good their promise to celebrate young Tharnicaa's fourth birthday with her, after she needlessly marked every birthday in arbitrary immigration detention.

Under the *Migration Act*, The Minister for Immigration the Hon Alex Hawke MP has the ability to grant the family members the visas they need for a permanent solution so they can rebuild their lives.

Our great country is behind this family. More than half a million people signed a petition calling for the family's release and immediate return to Biloela. They are joined by medical professionals, children's advocates, elected representatives (including from your own parties), educators, academics, broadcasters, business owners, peak bodies and community leaders.

As Christian leaders, we echo the call for a compassionate, fair, safe, common sense and permanent solution. We stand in solidarity with this young family seeking peace, safety and stability, and with the Biloela community who are waiting to welcome them back home.

Sincerely,

<b>Title</b>	<b>Full name</b>	<b>Role</b>	<b>Diocese</b>
The Right Revd	Jeremy Greaves	Bishop for the Northern Region	Anglican Church Southern Queensland
The Right Revd	Clarence E Bester	Bishop	Diocese of Wangaratta
The Right Revd	Mark Calder	Bishop	Diocese of Bathurst
The Most Revd	Phillip Aspinall AC	Archbishop	Anglican Church Southern Queensland
The Right Revd Dr	Peter Stuart	Bishop	Diocese of Newcastle
The Right Revd	Donald Kirk	Bishop	Diocese of Riverina
The Right Revd	Ian Coutts	Bishop	Diocese of Bunbury
The Right Revd Dr	Keith Joseph	Bishop	Diocese of North Queensland
The Right Revd	Jeremy James	Assistant Bishop	Diocese of Perth
The Right Revd	Denise Ferguson	Assistant Bishop	Diocese of Adelaide
The Right Revd Dr	Chris Jones	CEO Anglicare Tasmania, Assistant Bishop	Diocese of Tasmania
The Right Revd	Mark Short	Bishop	Diocese of Canberra and Goulburn
The Right Revd	Grant Dibden	Bishop to the Australian Defence Force	
The Right Revd	John Roundhill	Bishop for the Southern Region	Anglican Church Southern Queensland
The Right Revd	Cameron Venables	Bishop for the Western Region	Anglican Church Southern Queensland
The Right Revd	Paul Barker	Assistant Bishop	Diocese of Melbourne
Mrs	Anne Hywood	General Secretary	Anglican Church of Australia
The Right Revd	Matt Brain	Bishop	Diocese of Bendigo
The Most Revd	Kay Goldsworthy AO	Archbishop	Diocese of Perth
The Right Revd	Kate Prowd	Assistant Bishop	Diocese of Melbourne
The Right Revd	Richard Condie	Bishop	Diocese of Tasmania
The Right Revd Dr	Michael Stead	Bishop of South Sydney	Diocese of Sydney
The Right Revd	Rod Chiswell	Bishop	Diocese of Armidale
The Right Revd	Peter Lin	Bishop of Georges River Region	Diocese of Sydney
The Right Revd	Chris McLeod	Bishop alongside Aboriginal people	
The Right Revd	Garry Weatherill	Bishop	Diocese of Ballarat

The Right Revd Dr	Murray Harvey	Bishop	Grafton
The Right Revd Prof	Stephen Pickard	Executive Director	Australian Centre for Christianity and Culture
The Right Revd	Sonia Roulston	Assistant Bishop	Diocese of Newcastle
The Right Revd	Tim Harris	Assistant Bishop	Diocese of Adelaide