



Hindu Council of Australia

(ACN 082 437 670)

Media Release

Repeal the draconian criminal conviction and fine for Australian Citizen for escaping COVID and returning home from India

Hindu Council of Australia appreciates Australian Government support to India for fighting second wave of COVID 19.

However we strongly oppose the government's decision about up to 5 years Jail and /or \$ 66,000 fine for returning Australians who have been in India within the last 14 days. Racial element is obviously appearing in this law. It is difficult to imagine that the Australian Government would jail and fine its citizens returning from the US or UK.

By the time India started its repatriation flights, Australia implemented flight cap @about 200 per week. It would take about 1 year for Aussie struck in India to come home at this rate.

It is government's moral and legal obligations to let Australians return home.

To ban Australian citizens from returning to their own country of citizenship, particularly when their lives are in danger, is not morally appropriate and may be in breach of Australia's international human rights obligations.

We call on Australian Government to urgently take the following steps:

- Abolish the draconian criminal conviction and fines for Australians returning home from India, just for escaping COVID and return home.
- All stranded Australians should be vaccinated by Australian government.
- Govt should give each one of them a tentative schedule of evacuation
- All stranded Australians should be tested for Covid by Australian government.
- Those found positive should be looked after by consulate staff to ensure they are getting all the help they need.
- Those who are already in hospital should be constantly contacted by consulate staff to ensure they are getting all the treatment they need.
- They should all be evacuated ASAP and brought into quarantine facilities here in Australia.
- Australia should improve and expand its quarantine facilities to ensure Australians from all over world can return home.
- Assure Australians in India that they are as much Australians as other Australians.

Let's treat all Australians equal whether they are First nation or brown or white

Ends.

3 May 2021