

The Right Honourable Scott Morrison  
Prime Minister of Australia  
CANBERRA ACT 2600

Dear Prime Minister

We, the detainees, currently held within the Australian Immigration Detention Centres, write as a collective this open letter to raise our serious concerns about the current COVID-19 pandemic currently spreading through Australia.

Clearly, it is only a matter of time before a detainee is infected and, due to the close living conditions, it will spread through the compound within days.

Detainees are acting extremely responsibly and are being proactive. We are doing everything possible to prevent the virus from entering our environment.

However, we hold many concerns and seek to have them addressed.

At present, staff are verbally reporting upon entrance to the Centre. This is not sufficient and temperature testing must be implemented immediately.

Not all staff are wearing gloves and face masks. Both need to be immediately implemented as Serco policy.

Australian Border Force, kitchen staff, cleaners, maintenance staff and tradesmen need to be in coverall protective suits with gloves.

Clearly, the Centre does not have the medical resources to contain or treat an outbreak of the virus. The only plan at the moment is to hope that COVID-19 does not enter the Centre. After that, we are completely exposed and vulnerable. This needs to be addressed. Is there a plan for those most at risk? If so, those on the list need to be informed and a contingency agreed upon.

The virus will not discriminate. It will infect, young and old, healthy and at risk, wealthy and poor.

This virus comes from animals. Humans have never been exposed to it in our history and thus no-one has any immunity to it. However, this is not the scary part, the virus mutates rapidly. It only took two weeks to learn how to jump from human to human. The medical profession have no medicines to use against it – basically all humans are on their own, especially those with lung conditions and depressed immune systems. The depressed immune system one develops by living in cramped caged conditions, in close contact with other humans while under enormous emotional stress, torture and distress. For many this has been months if not years.

We are now finding out that the virus has mutated again. Presently, there are two strains, strain S and strain L. This makes it twice as hard to develop a vaccine.

There are many within the Centre that are at risk. We have many asthmatics, diabetics, heart conditions among others. They are at extreme risk as the virus is a lung eater. They have a right to medical treatment as per everyone else. They have the right to be fully prepared and to protect themselves. Unfortunately, neither of these exist at the moment.

The personal emotional suffering by the detainees at the moment is obvious. Detainees are dazed, dis-orientated and in despair. They can't see their families, their families can't see them. They do not know what is happening with their loved ones and, equally, their loved ones are in the dark about the health and welfare of the detainees.

We need to be with our families at this time.

For the protection of the Australian community and the detainees we advocate that the officers and other employees self-isolate with their families to discontinue being high risk carriers whom could potentially cause mass deaths within the detention centres, also within their families and the Australian community.

The current management of detainees currently breaches health and safety regulations and poses multiple breaches to the Victorian Health and Safety Act 2004. Human Rights are being breached daily with no consideration for as human beings with feelings and emotions.

Tensions and anxiety are mounting at rapid speed within the detention centres and we implore you to save the lives of many people by putting forward conditions that we can adhere to whereby we are reunited with our families and continue to be monitored by the Immigration Department of Australia.

There is a principal much bigger than the need to keep individuals in a cage, forcing them to sit in fear, awaiting an uncertain future. It is against their human rights, it is against human dignity, it is against compassion and welfare for your fellow man.

All other great western nations have the leadership to see and be proactive in this regard and we call on you, as Prime Minister, to do the same and follow the same enlighten leadership of others.

It is further pointed out that, the majority of detainees are reissued with a visa. At present we have not been found guilty of any crime – we are being assessed. The probability is that detainees will have their visa given back. Thus, in effect, Australia is holding innocent until proven guilty men in a caged environment and allowing them to be exposed to a potential killer disease without giving them the dignity to see and spend time with their families. In World War II this was called a concentration camp.

History will judge you harshly. Law suits will be expensive.

Simply, to release the detainees is the right thing to do.

Most Respectfully

Residents/ Detainees of Fraser/ Brisbane Immigration Transit Accommodation

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1-H9R7VN7

1-H9Q5J1

1-H4A3FIK

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C. Simpson  
J. H. H.

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