



UNITED INDIAN ASSOCIATIONS INC.

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JOINT SUBMISSION BY UIA & OAMGA TO ATTORNEY GENERAL OF AUSTRALIA

Indian Community concerned about the negative impact of Dr.Haneef's case on Indian Doctors and Professionals

United Indian Association (**UIA**) is the Peak Body representing the various migrant community groups of Indian Origin in NSW in particular and Australia in general and Overseas and Australian Medical Graduates Association. Inc (**OAMGA**) represents the overseas trained doctors majority of them being of Indian Sub-continent origin.

While the Indian Community condemns terrorism in any shape or form and supports any action taken by the Australian Government to tackle terrorism in order to protect the Australian Community, **UIA** and **OAMGA** are deeply concerned about the negative impact the recent events involving the Gold Coast based Dr. Haneef is having on the Indian Community.

The recent developments involving the dropping of charges against Dr.Haneef has to a large extent vindicated the views of UIA and OAMGA and their call for "Rule of Law" to prevail and Dr. Haneef is given a fair go. There is no doubt that Australia is one of the greatest democracies in the world if not the greatest but this incident has eroded that title to some extent and many legal and political pundits around the world are questioning the intentions of the Government and rightly so.

It is surprising that the investigations on Dr. Haneef were conducted in full media glare. The media misused this and showed the overseas trained doctors, specifically Indian doctors in bad light which has created a community backlash on Indian doctors in particular and professionals of Indian origin in general. We all know that Governments of all persuasions depend on Indian trained doctors and health professionals for the delivery of health services in rural and regional Australia. Therefore the question arises why Dr. Haneef's case was not treated like any other investigation which is usually carried out protecting the identity of the person being investigated so that the suspect is treated as innocent until proven guilty.

It is a matter of regret that Government is not doing enough to diffuse the community anxiety and media tainting and stereotyping of the Indian doctors. **UIA** and **OAMGA** express their deepest concern at the inaction and apathy of the Government towards the negative impact this issue is having on the law-abiding and socially responsible Indian Community in Australia.

UIA and OAMGA would urge the Federal Government to come out with statements of apology to the Indian Community in general and Indian Doctors in particular in print and electronic media without any further delay to ensure that there will not be a snowballing effect of the community backlash on the Indian Community.

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