# Controversy over Australian Immigration Policy as Convicted Criminals Allowed to Stay



Australia's immigration policy has come under scrutiny following a directive, known as Ministerial Direction 99, allowing convicted criminals to stay in the country. Issued by Immigration Minister Andrew Giles in January 2023, the directive mandates consideration of an individual's community ties before revoking their visa. This has resulted in the Administrative Appeals Tribunal (AAT) restoring visas to non-citizens convicted of serious crimes, including violent offenses.

Labor's Murray Watt confirmed that the government is actively considering reforms to the directive after cases of serious offenders retaining their visas raised "deep concerns." Home Affairs Minister Clare O'Neil reiterated the government's commitment to reviewing problematic cases, with Giles already re-canceling some visas, including that of a Sudanese man charged with murder.

Home Affairs Department Secretary Stephanie Foster apologized for not informing Giles timely about AAT decisions, which has sparked controversy and prompted calls from the opposition for Giles' dismissal.

Federal officials, including associate secretary for immigration Emma Cassar, have provided advice on potential changes to the directive, which could involve policy and legal adjustments. The government maintains that community safety remains a top priority in visa determinations.