

Asylum seekers and border protection

Australia is a nation of migration. Our first Australians migrated here some forty thousand years ago. Since then we have seen our nation build on a diverse heritage of cultures that has contributed to our proud nation.

Our immigrant heritage is quintessential to being Australian. It is not necessary to have been born in Australia to be Australian and it would be hypocritical to suggest that any person is undeserving of Australian citizenship simply because he or she wants a better life.

However, there needs to be a process of immigration that is fair to all who want to come to Australia and at the same time does not undermine the social or economic fabric of the nation.

Creating a framework that respects the rights and needs of people who seek to become Australians, to enjoy the lifestyle we largely take for granted, while preserving that lifestyle competitively for our own citizens, is perhaps one of the most perplexing issues we face as a nation. It is a delicate balance of performing our humanitarian responsibility to those who are less fortunate than us without compromising our own existence. This issue challenges the very notion of what it is to be Australian in the land of opportunity without a discriminatory class system.

“For those who’ve come across the seas we’ve boundless plains to share” Australian National Anthem

The increasing trend toward illegal entry by boat, primarily via Indonesia, is problematic for three reasons:

- Firstly, the risk to life in making the perilous journey to Australia in barely seaworthy vessels is profound and unacceptable to both the migrants and the defence personnel deployed to intercept them. The humanitarian implications of this situation are very publicly on display and public policy failures are impacting on Australia’s humanitarian reputation internationally and domestically.
- Secondly, the sheer number of people trying to enter Australia is placing an unmanageable burden on Australia’s systems to receive, shelter and process these people. Again, the humanitarian implications of this situation are very publicly on display and public policy failures are impacting on Australia’s humanitarian reputation internationally and domestically.
- Thirdly, the ease of entry and inability to process the asylum seekers adequately is now posing an unmanageable national security risk with evidence mounting that undeserving and undesirable individuals are being inappropriately assessed and managed by immigration and security personnel.

Australian citizens are being forced to fund the entire program of interception, processing, transport and repatriation either in Australia or elsewhere. In addition, national security is increasingly under pressure and the opportunity for entry by undesirables and the implications for Australian citizens if they are successful are profound.

Genuine asylum seekers are being caught up in a wave of irregular maritime arrivals and Australia is unable to deal with their circumstances in an appropriate and compassionate way and timeframe.

The success of the illegal transportation of people to Australia is providing an incentive to non-refugee aspirants. In turn, this is creating a financial incentive to crews who transport them, placing all in harm’s way unduly.

KAP is obliged to address an asylum seeker policy.

“The parable of the Good Samaritan challenges us to understand that violence towards those who are the least powerful among us can take the form of legislative acts or of human indifference and disconnection.”

Lilia Fernandez

KAP is committed to meaningfully deter asylum seekers from boarding boats in Indonesia or any other country in order to seek asylum in Australia. KAP is committed to mitigate the financial cost of asylum seeker interception processing, housing and repatriation to the Australian taxpayer. KAP is committed to

demonstrate humanitarian compassion in balance with deterring unacceptably dangerous irregular maritime arrivals.

KAP is also committed to reforming the processing of asylum seekers to end the extraordinary waste that is now expended in the industry that has sprung up around the detention of these people. It is clear that the current bureaucratic process is ineffective and that the Department has no real capacity to competently assess the legitimacy of the claims by asylum seekers. It is apparent that this aspect of the asylum seeker issue is not being addressed, while it is perhaps the bigger source of apprehension for the Australian public.

Subject to an initial security and health screening, KAP would require that if asylum seekers are to be granted temporary visas, they only be allowed to enter the community on strict social contracts that compel them to close monitoring until such time as the Australian Government is satisfied they pose no threat. These temporary visas would also provide conditions in relation to settlement and assimilation into the Australian community, compelling a commitment to Australian culture, and compelling a productive contribution to the Australian economy. Any breach of this kind of social contract would result in termination of the visa.

KAP will pursue policies in regard to asylum seekers and border security that:

- Commit to increase and enhance its fleet of patrol boats (to be made in Australia).
- Restrict Australia's migration zone to the mainland.
- Any boat found in Australian waters, that is seaworthy and carrying asylum seekers, shall be turned around and escorted out of Australian waters. Any immediate humanitarian needs of passengers or crew shall be met at interception.
- Suspected people smuggler ring leaders and organisers who benefit substantially financially should be prosecuted vigorously and they should defend themselves at their own expense.
- Asylum seekers claims are assessed quickly to screen for health and obvious security risks. Successful refugees should only be granted temporary visas and conditional release into the community on a strict social contract subject to close electronic monitoring for a probationary period in lieu of detention.
- Refugees on temporary visas should be employed/deployed in work for the dole type programs, particularly in the construction of their own housing and infrastructure requirements.