

Socialist Alliance

Firstly we would close the detention centres (both on and offshore) and end mandatory detention, abolish waiting times for social security, end all deportations and provide full citizenship rights. We would give access to newly arrived migrants and asylum seekers to access English language training and employment assistance in addition to existing services.

Socialist Equality

If the world economy is reorganized to meet the needs of the world's population and an end is put to the wars, political repression and social misery in countries throughout the world you would not have the growing refugee problems that afflict the whole planet which are the by product of the political meddling and domination in many countries by the major world powers and somewhat minor powers such as Australia.

Nevertheless, the SEP demands that refugees held in detention centres be released immediately and all forms of immigration control and restriction lifted. Workers must have the right to live and work wherever they wish, with full citizenship rights and full access to social benefits.

Coalition

Under the Coalition, Australia now accepts approximately 13,000 refugees each year for permanent settlement under its humanitarian programs. On a per capita basis, this is the highest humanitarian intake by any country in the world.

In deciding the composition of our refugee and humanitarian policy, the Government considers who is in the greatest need of our assistance. Various groups are consulted, including representatives of non — government refugee organisations and the United Nations High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR).

Recognising our responsibility for newly arrived refugees does not simply end once they arrive in Australia, considerable effort and expense is directed towards providing English language assistance, income support, vocational training, support to develop life skills, family relationship counselling, health services and education about legal responsibilities. Each program is aimed towards assisting refugees move towards happy, productive lives.

Following an examination of settlement services, the Coalition allocated an additional \$210 million in this year's budget to enhance these programs. This is in addition to the \$250 million a year the Coalition Government normally spends on settlement related services.

This extra money is especially needed to enable young migrants to speak adequate English, to assist victims of torture and trauma and to simply teach people the basic essentials needed to manage from week to week.

In respect to illegal entry, the Coalition is committed to the elimination of people smuggling, because it both endangers the lives of asylum seekers and discriminates against the thousands of refugees who often spend years in camps following a lawful process to enter Australia. People smuggling is a sophisticated, multinational business which cares nothing for those it profits from. To that end, we will maintain our current policy setting which means that people who try to enter Australia illegally will not be permitted to enter Australia.

Implementation of this policy is not at the expense of asylum seekers' welfare. All potential immigrants who seek to enter Australian illegally receive medical examinations and medical treatment where appropriate.

Living conditions are made as comfortable as possible and considerable efforts are made to provide a 'normalised' environment. Rooms are airconditioned; food reflects cultural sensitivities; residents have access to sporting and exercise facilities, television and libraries; are supplied with telephone cards and may attend English language classes. At all time, religious freedom is respected.

programs, Labor will ensure that unforeseen world events that necessitate special responses can be accommodated.

Asylum seekers who are independently determined to be refugees under the Migration Act 1958 will be given permanent protection. Asylum claims made in Australia should be assessed in a manner which is both fast and affords procedural fairness. Labor will process claims quickly through a new Refugee Determination Tribunal, with appeals to Federal Magistrates. Those found to be refugees under the Refugee Convention should be provided with appropriate settlement outcomes and services, while those without successful refugee or humanitarian claims should be quickly returned.

Detention of asylum seekers should only be used for health, identity and security checks. Children and family groups should initially be placed under supervision within the community. In other circumstances, detention would remain mandatory for the duration of these initial check. Conditions of detention must be humane and appropriate to the needs of asylum seekers, with appropriate alternatives to detention centres made to meet the needs of unaccompanied children and family groups. The length and conditions of detention must be subject to review and detention centres managed by the public sector.

Labor will end the so-called "Pacific Solution", with its huge cost to Australian taxpayers.

Labor recognises that the arbitrary 45-day-rule results in legitimate asylum seekers on bridging visas being unnecessarily denied the right to work while their claim is being processed. Labor will work to develop guidelines based on merit so that frivolous or vexatious visa applications will be denied those rights, instead of applying an arbitrary 45-day-time limit.

Labor will create an Australian Coastguard to strengthen our borders, increasing Australia's capacity to prevent illegal fishing and smuggling operations. Labor will implement harsh penalties for people smugglers, including life sentences for the worst of the people smugglers while pursuing strong international and regional arrangements to deter secondary movements of asylum seekers.

To further deter people smugglers, Labor will continue the excision of Christmas Island, Cocos (Keeling) Islands and Ashmore Reef from Australia's migration zone. In accordance with the core Australian principles of fairness and decency, when people flee persecution and reach Australia the persecution must end. Australia should comply with the letter and the spirit of the obligations Australia has voluntarily assumed by signing the Refugee Convention and other relevant international instruments.

Labor will develop further multilateral solutions, recognising the importance of regional neighbours, with the aim of eradicating people smuggling, deterring secondary movement and enabling refugees to access processing and appropriate settlement outcomes. Australia should seek to eradicate people smuggling, which is an organised criminal activity that costs lives, by effective law enforcement as well as relevant international agreements.

ASYLUM SEEKERS

Greens

Greens Senators will work to end mandatory detention and have asylum seekers claims assessed while they live in the community. We will also work to end offshore processing and temporary protection visas. We believe that refugees need to be treated with dignity in an open and accountable humanitarian visa process.

Australian Democrats

The Australian Democrats have been very vocal and active for more than 30 years in the Parliament and the community advocating on behalf of asylum seekers and refugees. We have relentlessly held to our core principles of social justice and human rights and campaigned on many levels including working on individual asylum seeker cases, opposing cutbacks to the rights of asylum seekers and refugees, opposing mandatory detention and the odious 'Pacific solution', regularly visiting detainees at all detention centres, including Nauru, and fighting for legislation which would ensure a fair outcome.

For more details on our policy and actions see

http://www.democrats.org.au/docs/ActionPlans/Immigration_Refugees_2007.pdf

http://www.democrats.org.au/docs/ActionPlans/Immigration_MandatoryDetention_2007.pdf

http://www.democrats.org.au/docs/ActionPlans/Immigration_BetterSettlementServices_2007.pdf

Christian Democrats

Australia should continue to be a world leader in being a generous haven for genuine refugees through internationally supervised and orderly refugee resettlement programs.

CDP considers that Australia should continue to meet its international obligations to treat unauthorised arrivals humanely and expediently consider any claims they make for refugees status.

Persons who arrive illegally and make claims for protection that are proven false should be removed from Australia as soon as practicable. Mandatory detention should continue for all persons without authority to be in Australia, although provisions for supervised release into the community for families with children should be considered.

Priority should be given to refugee applicants who are most likely to readily integrate into the Australian way of life, including those who are being persecuted for their Christian faith.

Labor

The Labor Party did not provide a response for this forum. Policy information has been collated from the ALP website www.alp.org.au

Labor will administer a fair and flexible refugee and humanitarian program. While acknowledging that Australia has one of the world's most generous humanitarian