

Persuasive on asylum seekers



**ASSIGN
BUSTER**

“ This is a humanitarian, decent country,” said Mr. John Howard back in 2001, this statement was coincidentally made during the time in which 438 Afghan asylum seekers were refused permission to enter Australian waters. Arriving in a cargo vessel, the MV Tampa, after almost sinking in an Indonesian boat, the captain of the Tampa claimed that he had saved the asylum seekers’ lives at the request of the Australian Search and Rescue authorities, so why was it that the Tampa was told to turn back?

Obviously, we don’t seem to be much of a humanitarian, decent country if this is the harsh treatment we give to those who seek our assistance. In that cargo vessel, there were people who were unconscious; people who were attempting to flee a country which they honestly believed was a threat to them. If we, as a country, are constantly publicising our hospitality to newcomers, then are we really practicing what we preach? I put to you this question: ‘ Are we hospitable? Or are we hostile? ’ We are one among 9 nations to sign a convention stating that we will facilitate the assimilation and naturalisation of refugees.

This is why it appears so hypocritical when we turn our backs against the approaching asylum seekers and claim that we cannot help them. Some say that we should not be accepting asylum seekers with the degree of leniency that we do because we are unaware of whom these people really are and may misjudge their character when in actuality they may be terrorists. However, the possibility that these asylum seekers who land on our shores having travelled by boat being terrorists is highly unlikely.

The distance from a country such as Afghanistan to Australia is an extremely long way to cover - more than 11, 000 kilometres. If a terrorist ever did intend on terrorising our country, there would be more plausible methods for them to carry out their action. It would only be natural to assume that they would be associated with a larger organisation, possess large amounts of money and be well-connected to the underground, allowing them to travel more comfortably in a plane rather than travel meaninglessly and unnecessarily on an expensive and unstable boat trip. Dr.

Darryl Jervis, international relations lecturer at the University of Sydney, states: " the argument is quite ridiculous in some respects. Why spend \$15 000 to get on a boat that would take days to get here and almost certainly be intercepted when you can take a plane? " So what kind of country are we? Are we hospitable? Or are we hostile? People who come to Australia as refugees are doubtlessly facing some sort of hardship far too difficult to tolerate. If they had not been, it would probably be extremely unlikely for them leave all that they know behind and come to a land that is so foreign to them.

These are people who are TRULY suffering. They need people like US to support their every move so that we can provide them with a life they deserve. They do not DESERVE to be afraid of stepping outside their house for fear that they will be shot. They do not DESERVE to be condemned to death for their religious opinions. And they do not DESERVE to be discriminated for their political views. If we are all allowed to live a life of freedom with as many possible rights as there can be, is it not only fair to let other human beings exercise theirs?

If we continue to deny refugees entry into our country, then we will be denying the basic moral obligations we as Australians follow and abide by each day. Do we really want to turn into hypocrites, whereby we say one thing, and do another? Are we being hospitable? Or are we hostile? For the record, an asylum seeker can only be deemed an illegal immigrant if the country they seek refuge in does not grant them acceptance for their refugee application. There are countless numbers of asylum seekers and the number is escalating - this can only mean that we should further increase the number of asylum seekers we accept.

The current 12 000 a year does not seem to be holding ground and we can either eliminate the larger problem which are the reasons for why these people leave in the first place, or we can agree to allow more asylum seekers to enter our country and accept their applications. This way we are not breaking any laws as a country and as an added supplement, are essentially changing lives. This is what we promised, and this is what we should carry out. By doing this, we ensure that we are indeed a country that is hospitable and definitely not hostile.