



CAMPAIGN KIT

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Any person or group involved with campaigning must conform with the requirements of the *Commonwealth Electoral Act 1918*.

Campaign materials such as leaflets, brochures, pamphlets, etc, have to be authorised and need to include details of who printed them. For example, this campaign kit is:

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How-to-vote cards, should they be used, have to be registered.

The information you need is on the Australian Electoral Commission website at www.aec.gov.au. The information is easily understood and the site is particularly user-friendly.

The Justice Project Inc. makes this kit available on the understanding that those using it will abide by the requirements of the *Commonwealth Electoral Act 1918*.

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THE CAMPAIGN

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1. INTRODUCTION

What We Want

The Justice Project's reform policy can be summed up in these terms:

"We want decent treatment and fair processing for all asylum seekers and refugees, regardless of how they arrived in Australia."

How We Aim To Do It

We want to build on the great work that has already been done by a range of refugee support groups around the country. Our aim is to:

- co-ordinate a campaign, in the lead up to the federal election, for a fair and humane refugee policy for Australia, and
- provide resources for this campaign.

We want every voter to know where each candidate, in his or her electorate and in the Senate, stands on refugee reform.

We will not endorse particular candidates or tell people how to vote. Our aim is to educate and engage so voters can make an informed choice about the people they want to represent them and the issues they want addressed.

Our primary vehicle for doing this will be a candidate questionnaire or survey.

Our aim is to have every candidate standing for election in the House of Representatives and in the Senate surveyed on a range of refugee issues including our reform package (see 'our policy').

The results will be collated and the candidates ranked on the basis of their support for refugee reform. These rankings will then be published before Election Day.

This campaign kit is the first set of materials we have produced to assist a campaign. The campaign kit has two functions:

- to help existing refugee support groups develop an effective local campaign, and
- to be a 'how to' guide for those wanting to form a group in their area.

Sections 1–4 (The Campaign) are about the Justice Project Inc and our policies.

Sections 5–7 (Support Material) provide additional material about Australia's current immigration policies and practice as well as some case studies. These sections will be updated from time to time and will be available on the website.

Sections 8–14 (Campaign Tactics) are the 'how to' guide, for forming your own group as well as campaign ideas for existing groups.

The last section of the kit discusses a questionnaire for candidates. It covers a range of important refugee issues, including our reform policy. The questionnaire has not been included in this kit and is not available from the website. If you are interested in using it in your electorate, please contact us as soon as possible. This will help us co-ordinate the distribution, collating and publishing of results.

We encourage the formation of new groups and support the work of existing groups to inform the public about the harshness and unfairness of refugee policy, such as the conditions in detention centres, the temporary protection visa system and the imprisoning of innocent children in detention.

How You Can Help

You can help us in a number of ways.

By donating funds;

By donating time and skills, and

By joining the campaign.

If you wish to form a group or join a group in your area please let us know so that we can support you and co-ordinate our efforts.

If you are a member of an existing group, please let us know what you are doing or what you are planning to do.

And if you want to use the questionnaire, please register with us so that we can collate and publish the results.

Something To Remember

The good news is that the more you find out about refugee policy, the more you will come to realise that the facts are with you – not only is Australia's refugee policy lacking in compassion, it contravenes a number of international laws and conventions.

Our aim is to use the facts to inform and persuade as many voters as we can to join our campaign for decent treatment and fair processing for all asylum seekers and refugees, regardless of how they arrived in Australia.

2. ABOUT THE JUSTICE PROJECT INC

Commitment

Basic human rights for all regardless of race, colour, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth or other status.¹

Focus

To give a fair go to refugees, asylum seekers and those who need humanitarian protection.

Values

The Justice Project Inc believes in:

- The Australian tradition of a fair go
- Democracy, community and public service
- Equality, tolerance and the celebration of diversity.

We want a return to an Australia that made people in genuine need feel welcome, safe and able to contribute to the community.

We believe that border protection is a legitimate objective but one that has to be balanced against humanitarian considerations. We believe we can protect our borders and our values at the same time.

Aim

To co-ordinate an effective non-party political campaign for a fair and humane refugee policy for Australia, and to provide resources for this campaign for a fair and humane refugee policy for Australia, and to provide resources for this campaign.

To restore the value of a fair go in Australian public life and policy.

1. Taken from the United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights, signed by Australia in December 1948.

3. OUR POLICY - IN BRIEF

What We Want

Decent treatment and fair processing for all asylum seekers and refugees, regardless of how they arrived in Australia.

Decent treatment

1. Asylum seekers should only be held in detention:

To do health and security checks

For no longer than 30 days, unless a judge agrees there is a security risk.

They should then be released into the community, subject to remaining available for processing and, if necessary, removal from Australia. They should have a right to work, to Medicare and other benefits, until the claim for asylum is finalised.

This is fairer, more humane and cheaper. It is a better way.

2. No children or their families should be held in detention in Australia, Nauru or Christmas Island, or in high security “community housing”.
3. All detainees still on Nauru and Christmas Island should be moved to Australia to finalise their claims and get access to proper advice and support.
4. Asylum seekers in the community who are waiting for their cases to be determined should be allowed to work and get access to basic entitlements, including Medicare.
5. Once asylum seekers are granted refugee status, they should receive permanent protection. Temporary Protection Visas (TPV) should be abolished.
6. Grant permanent protection to asylum seekers on humanitarian grounds when they have no realistic option of safe return.

Fair processing

7. All applications for asylum should be processed without delay, in a fair and efficient manner with all asylum seekers being treated humanely.
8. A genuinely independent tribunal should replace the Refugee Review Tribunal (RRT). Members should be appropriately qualified and appointed for a substantial fixed term.
9. The ability of courts to correct tribunal errors should not be restricted.
10. The Australian government should accept full responsibility and accountability for the administration of detention centres and there should be complete disclosure of the costs, conditions and administration of these centres, here and offshore.

4. OUR POLICY - EXPLAINED

Decent Treatment

1 Asylum seekers should only be held in detention:

To do health and security checks

For no longer than 30 days, unless a judge is satisfied there is a security risk.

They should then be released into the community, subject to remaining available for processing and, if necessary, removal from Australia. They should have a right to work, to Medicare and other benefits, until the claim for asylum is finalised.

This is fairer, more humane and cheaper. It is a better way.

Reasons

Asylum seekers have a legal right, under both domestic and international law, to apply for asylum in Australia. Yet the Australian government is condemning asylum seekers to mandatory and indefinite detention even though they have committed no crime.

Australia signed the 1951 Convention relating to the Status of Refugees. The Convention states that people are not to be penalised for unauthorized entry to a country if they do so to request asylum.

Australia is the only country in the world to have non-reviewable and mandatory detention of asylum seekers. Other countries like New Zealand, Canada and other European countries, use detention only for a limited period immediately upon arrival and then release them into some form of community care while their claim is assessed.

The community care model is far less costly. Community placement and management of asylum seekers out of detention has been costed at \$60 per day, compared with an average cost of \$160 a day per person for onshore detention centres.

Experience has also shown that releasing asylum-seekers into the community is not a risk to security. ASIO has reported that from thousands of assessments they made between 2000 and 2002, no asylum seekers were found to be a security risk to Australia.

Research by the Hotham Mission shows that asylum seekers on conditional release into the community do not abscond.

The latest known position

According to the Department of Immigration and Multicultural and Indigenous Affairs (DIMIA) as of 2 June there are 1,032 people in detention.

There are approximately 8,000 asylum seekers living lawfully in the community on bridging visas waiting for their cases to be determined.

2 No children or their families should be held in detention in Australia, Nauru, Christmas Island, or in high-security “community housing”.

Reasons

The Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission found in its report on children in detention, *A Last Resort?* that:

- a. Australia’s immigration detention laws are inconsistent with the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child.
- b. Children in immigration detention, for long periods of time, were at risk of serious mental harm.
- c. At various times (between 1999 and 2002), children in immigration detention were not in a position to fully enjoy –
 - the right to be protected from all forms of physical or mental violence
 - the right to enjoy the highest attainable standard of physical and mental health
 - the right of children with disabilities to enjoy a full and decent life
 - the right to an appropriate education on the basis of equal opportunity.

The Report recommended that children in immigration detention should be released with their parents as soon as possible.

The latest known position

The Federal Government is yet to respond to the findings of the report.

At 5 July 2004, at least 95 children were being held in prison-like detention centres by the Australian Government. Figures from the Department of Immigration showed:

- 19 children in Nauru,
- 65 in mainland Australia, and
- 11 on Christmas Island.

More than half these children had been in detention for over two-and-a-half years.

Altogether, in the four years to June 2003, 2,184 children had been held in immigration detention centres – not counting the ones on Nauru and Manus Island.

Yet 92% turned out to be genuine refugees.

There are many problems with the high-security so-called “community housing” favoured by both the Government and ALP. In these places:

Wives are separated from husbands

Mothers and children live in compounds surrounded by a security fence, remotely-controlled gates and security cameras.

3 Offshore detention should end and all detainees still on Nauru and Christmas Island should be moved to Australia while their claims for asylum are decided.

Reasons

It will be three years in August since these people, rescued by the Norwegian freighter Tampa, were placed in camps outside Australia’s migration zone.

There they have had to wait without any legal advice or other support while their applications for refugee status were assessed. They cannot be visited by family, friends, journalists or lawyers.

This long wait in isolated places has been cruel and unnecessary. Many have now been shown to be genuine refugees.

By holding these people in such remote places, the Government is deliberately making it difficult for them to get social and legal support, and is exporting an undesirable policy of mandatory detention to the region.

It is also extremely costly.

The full cost of sending asylum-seekers to the Pacific has not been revealed but, according to some media reports, these costs for the ‘Pacific Solution’ are between \$400 and \$500 million. The Royal Australian Navy has spent further millions on transporting people to these remote detention centres.

The latest known position

The Manus Island detention centre has just been emptied with the last detainee gaining refugee status and arriving in Australia in June 2004, having cost \$4.3 million for just one six month period.

In May there were still about 260 people detained on Nauru.

Government estimates that the running of Nauru and Manus Island has cost at least \$170 million so far, with the Department of Immigration budgeting \$470 million over the next four years.

In June 42 people were detained on Christmas Island at an estimated cost of \$725 a day.

4 Asylum seekers in the community who are waiting for their cases to be determined should be allowed to work and get access to basic entitlements, including Medicare.

Reasons

About 8,000 asylum seekers are living lawfully in the community on bridging visas awaiting decisions; however they are not eligible for assistance from any Commonwealth funded welfare agency, such as Centrelink, Migrant Resource Centres, or housing support. They rely on the good will of churches and the community for their housing, food and medical costs.

Homelessness, health, nutrition, isolation and depression are all major concerns for asylum seekers in the community.

Asylum seekers on Bridging Visa E are refused the right to work, access to Medicare, or any welfare payments. This includes asylum seekers who have been released from detention on psychological or medical grounds.

Research on more than 200 asylum seekers conducted by Hotham Mission's Asylum Seeker Project on Bridging Visa E holders over a two year period, has shown that these asylum seekers were found to live in abject poverty with virtually no mainstream support available to them. The impact is felt particularly by single mothers and young asylum seekers.

5 Once asylum seekers are granted refugee status, they should receive permanent protection. Temporary Protection Visas should be abolished.

Reasons

To be accepted as a refugee a person has to meet certain criteria under international law.

However, in Australia, the government has introduced a two-class system.

If you are an asylum seeker who arrives by airplane with valid documents and qualify as a refugee you are granted permanent protection.

If you are an asylum seeker who arrives by boat with or without valid documents (because you had no choice) but still qualify as a refugee, you are denied permanent protection and instead get a temporary protection visa. This is unfair.

The test for permanent protection should be whether or not you meet the refugee criteria... not how you travelled to Australia. People who have proven their refugee status should be allowed to begin a new life.

Government policies which keep families apart are cruel and inhumane. Family integrity should be seen as sacrosanct in all aspects of refugee and immigration policy.

The present position

Asylum seekers who arrived without a valid visa or passport after 20 October 1999, found to be refugees, have not been granted permanent visas like other refugees. Instead, they have been granted three-year Temporary Protection Visas.

More than 90% of asylum seeker boat arrivals were found to be refugees.

Since November 1999, DIMIA has granted 8,912 temporary protection visas: 3,662 to Afghans, 4,269 to Iraqi, 475 to Iranians and 507 to other nationalities. The TPV entitles them to special benefits through Centrelink, however they are not eligible to access most settlement services funded by the Immigration Department.

They are allowed to work but the temporary nature of their visa makes them an unattractive prospect for employers.

They are not allowed to bring their spouse or children to Australia. If they leave Australia, even to visit their spouse and children, they are not allowed back.

Recent proposed changes are encouraging signs that the government is tempering its harsh TPV policy. However it remains to be seen how many TPV holders will be eligible to apply for mainstream migration visas. None of the core problems of the TPV policy have been resolved.

6 Grant permanent protection to asylum seekers on humanitarian grounds when they have no realistic option of safe return.

Reasons

Even though some asylum seekers in detention may not have “a well-founded fear of persecution” under the Refugee Convention, they do have genuine humanitarian concerns with no prospect of making a safe return home.

Rather than having to stay in detention indefinitely, many other countries allow people in similar positions to stay and live in the community.

This should apply in Australia.

The latest known position

According to DIMIA, in January 2004, of the 922 people in detention, there were:

- 282 people who had spent over 3 years in detention

- 174 people who had been in detention for 2–3 years.

Some have only a slim chance of either being released or being removed from Australia. Australia won't or can't forcibly return them to places like Afghanistan or Iraq, but neither will the Australian Government allow them to stay.

So they stay indefinitely in detention centres.

Fair Processing

7 All applications for asylum should be processed without delay, in a fair and efficient manner, with all asylum seekers being treated humanely.

Reasons

Statistics show that more than 90% of people who go through the asylum seeker process are eventually accepted as refugees. This is so, even after years and years of being held in a detention centre and going through the appeal system time and time again.

It is unnecessary and unfair.

The system needs to be changed so that legitimate refugees are welcomed into our country as quickly as possible, without causing them further trauma and hardship.

The present position

The determination process of an application for asylum is as follows:

On arrival, the asylum seeker is placed in detention.

An initial assessment of their claim for refugee status is made by the Department of Immigration. If successful the visa is granted. If not successful the asylum seeker may either go home or appeal.

They can appeal to the Refugee Review Tribunal (RRT). If successful at the RRT, a visa will be granted. If not successful, the applicant may either go home or appeal again, this time to the Federal Court.

However the Federal Court can review the case only on procedural issues and questions of law and not on whether there have been any errors in fact. The Federal Court can only recommend that the case go back to the RRT for rehearing.

8 A genuinely independent tribunal should replace the Refugee Review Tribunal. Members should be appropriately qualified and appointed for a substantial fixed term.

Reasons

In many cases, the RRT makes life and death decisions.

Whether or not an applicant is granted a protection visa is a matter of fundamental importance. It is not an overstatement to say that it may even be a matter of life and death. Any officer responsible for dealing with such matters must treat such applications with great care and with the utmost fairness.

Justice Weinberg in *A v Pelekanakis & Anor* (1999) 91FCR 70 at p.88

That is why their decisions must be fair, impartial and consistent.

The current structure and operation of the RRT cannot deliver fairness, impartiality or consistency. The Tribunal is not independent. Tribunal members are not always appropriately qualified and are often appointed on a party-political basis for short fixed terms.

This is the way tribunals work in banana republics.

Although the RRT has to make decisions about life or death, in refugee cases the applicant has no right to legal representation. A migration agent may be present in the hearing, but has no right to be heard. The right to legal representation is a fundamental and basic right that is being denied to extremely vulnerable and disadvantaged people.

While people who come before the tribunal may appeal to the Australian courts if they believe the wrong decision has been made, the present Government has severely curtailed the extent to which this is possible.

For example, they can appeal only on procedural issues and questions of law and not on whether there have been any errors in fact.

9 The ability of the courts to correct Tribunal errors should not be restricted.

Reasons

The government has severely restricted asylum seekers' ability to challenge Refugee Review Tribunal decisions. This reflects the Department of Immigration's long-standing policy objective to limit access to judicial review in migration cases. As noted above, they can now appeal decisions only on procedural issues and questions of law and not on whether there have been any errors in fact.

It is a basic principle of our democracy that a court should be able to correct decisions of administrative tribunals that are wrong. This principle has been undermined in relation to the RRT.

Often an administrative tribunal acts perfectly reasonably. Sometimes, of course, a tribunal makes a mistake. Other than in migration cases, these mistakes are mostly corrected by a court, which normally is given specific powers to fix the problem.

This how the system is meant to work.

This is how it should work in RRT cases.

10 The Australian government should accept full responsibility and accountability for the administration of detention centres and there should be complete disclosure of the costs, conditions and administration of these centres here and offshore.

Reasons

The Commonwealth, through DIMIA, owes a duty of care to detainees at all times. (Schedule to the Immigration Detention Standards) Liability cannot be avoided by refusing to act.

Detention centres should be open to public scrutiny, especially the behaviour of officers of Australasian Correctional Management (ACM), who are entrusted with upholding Australia's human rights obligations, not just the maintenance of security at the centres.

As exposed by various committees of the Senate, the Government has misled the Australian people on refugee issues.

For example:

The Department of Immigration 'contracts out' the management of Immigration Detention Centres to ACM and claims 'commercial-in-confidence' to refuse the release of important information.

The Australian Commonwealth Ombudsman, in a report on detention centres in Australia, found that employees of ACM had "cultural or attitudinal problems" including racial abuse, inappropriate use of force and the alleged harassment of detainees.

The media is refused access to mainland detention centres, and visitors are highly regulated.

Visa restrictions are used to block Australian observers and lawyers from going to Nauru.

Christmas Island and other detention centres are far removed from the scrutiny of the Australian public. It is costly and difficult for lawyers to access, not to mention family and friends.

The Howard Government was told early in the 2001 election campaign that its claim of asylum seekers throwing children overboard was false – but it failed to inform the public. There were naval photos the public was not allowed to see.

It is time for complete disclosure of the costs, conditions and administration of these centres here and offshore.

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5. QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

What's The Difference Between "Migrants", "Refugees" And "Asylum Seekers"?

Migrants make a conscious choice to come to Australia and can go home at any time if they choose.

Refugees are victims of persecution forced to leave their home countries. They are defined in the 1951 Convention relating to the Status of Refugees, to which Australia is a signatory.

Refugees come to Australia in one of two ways. Most come under the Refugee and Special Humanitarian Program, which is part of the immigration program. These people are selected overseas, and enter Australia with a visa that entitles them to permanent residency.

Other refugees apply for asylum once in Australia. Depending upon their method of arrival, once they have been found to be refugees, they either have the same rights and entitlements as refugees who have entered under the Refugee and Special Humanitarian Program or are granted a three-year Temporary Protection Visa, which has very different entitlements.

Asylum seekers try to reach a country, such as Australia, where they can seek protection. There is a three-stage process available for assessing asylum claims:

- An initial assessment of the claim is made by the Department of Immigration.
- An appeal is available to the Refugee Review Tribunal (RRT).
- There is a further appeal option to the Federal Court if there has been an alleged error in law by the RRT or new information has come to hand. The Federal Court can only recommend that the case be heard again by RRT in the light of this new information.

Asylum seekers in the community. If people enter Australia with valid visas and lodge protection visa applications, they are given a bridging visa that allows them to remain in the community, rather than detention centres, while their application for refugee status is being considered.

No asylum seekers are eligible for assistance at Centrelink, Migrant Resource Centres, Telephone Interpreter Service or any Commonwealth funded settlement or housing support.

A significant number of asylum seekers are on Bridging Visa E and are refused the right to work, Medicare or any welfare payment. This includes asylum seekers who have:

- not applied for a Protection Visa within 45 days of arrival in Australia,

- been found not to be entitled to refugee protection by DIMIA/RRT and are applying to the Courts for judicial review, or approaching the Minister for humanitarian consideration, or
- been released from detention on psychological or medical grounds.

Asylum seekers in detention. Some asylum seekers arrive with no documents or with false documents and are often referred to as “unauthorized arrivals”. Applying for a passport and/or an exit visa can be far too dangerous for some refugees; so too can be an approach to an Australian Embassy for a visa. According to the Migration Act, all unauthorized arrivals are subject to mandatory detention until final decisions have been made about them. These people are detained in one of five immigration detention centres while their claim for refugee status is decided.

Is There A “Queue” For Asylum Seekers?

In Iraq and Afghanistan there are no “queues”. There is barely civil order of any kind, much less a “queue” for things like visas. Australia has no diplomatic presence to “queue” at. Many of these people live in refugee camps where there is no resettlement process at all.

A small number of people have come to Australia by boat as a desperate last resort. However, international law requires that asylum seekers should not be penalised for the way they enter a country.

Is It True That Only Rich Asylum Seekers Can Reach Our Shores?

The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees says that payments to people smugglers range from \$A4,000 to \$A5,000. In reality, many families and communities pool their resources in an attempt to send loved ones to safety.

People smuggling is a crime. However, this does not negate the legitimacy of asylum seekers’ claims, nor their need to seek refuge. You cannot justify treating innocent people harshly to deter others.

Are Boat People “Illegals”?

It is not illegal under Australian law to arrive in Australia without authority and seek asylum. The so-called “illegals” have not committed any offence. On the contrary, under the UN Refugee Convention, which has applied for 50 years, Australia has an obligation to take in asylum seekers and assess their claims. “Illegals” are people who overstay their visas.

Yet when asylum seekers arrive in Australia we lock them up indefinitely in conditions of the utmost harshness. Australia, alone among civilised western democracies, imprisons innocent people who seek our help.

In the three years from July 1999 to June 2002 there were some 9,160 persons who arrived by boat, unauthorised, mainly from Afghanistan and Iraq. Over 90% of those who originated from these two countries during this time were

found to be genuine refugees, according to the Department of Immigration and Multicultural and Indigenous Affairs.

If We Let One In, Won't They Come In Floods?

Australia is one of the most difficult countries in the world to get to. We have no common borders. We also have tough laws, even without the present harsh additions to those laws.

For these reasons it is highly unlikely that we will ever see large numbers of asylum seekers. They will probably keep coming, but in small numbers. It is most unlikely there will ever be a "flood".

By world standards, Australia receives a small number of asylum seekers. In 2001–02:

- The United Kingdom received 88,300 asylum seekers.
- Canada received 44,050.

The number of unauthorised arrivals in Australia has never been much more than 4,000 in any one year.

Are Asylum Seekers A Threat To Our Borders?

Hardly. The small numbers of people who try, and the difficulty of reaching Australia, make it difficult to argue that asylum seekers are a threat to our borders.

Boat people are ordinary men and women, many of them urban professionals, who are fleeing their countries because of war or persecution.

The head of ASIO has said several times that no terrorist has ever come to Australia among the asylum seekers, and he does not expect that they ever will.

As a matter of common sense, a would-be terrorist is more likely to come here with a visitor's visa than to risk death at sea or indefinite detention.

The biggest so-called "threat" to the integrity of our borders comes from people who over-stay their visas. As of July 2003 there were 59,800 of them – 20% from the US or the UK. Compare this to the 1,277 people who arrived on seven boats for the year ending June 2002.

Are There Any Refugees In Detention?

All refugees have at one time been asylum seekers. All asylum seekers who arrive without authorisation are detained in detention until their claims for refugee status are processed.

It is perverse to keep asylum seekers in detention until their claims are heard. They have done nothing illegal so, under the terms of the Refugee Convention, they have a perfect right to be here.

What Can These Refugees Contribute To Australia?

It is a myth that most refugees are illiterate peasants. The majority that come to Australia are educated middle class people whose education, profession or political opinions have drawn them to the attention of the authorities and resulted in their persecution.

By definition refugees are survivors. They have survived because they have courage, ingenuity and creativity. These are qualities we value in Australia. The challenge for Australia is to assist newly arrived refugees to process the experiences of their past and rebuild their lives in Australia. If we do this we will reap the benefits of the qualities and experiences they bring to Australia.

6. VISA BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Australia's permanent immigration program has two components – Migration (non-Humanitarian) for skilled and family migrants and Humanitarian for refugees and others with humanitarian needs.

This campaign kit is concerned solely with the Humanitarian Program, which comprises two components: Offshore Resettlement program for persons overseas, and Onshore Protection for those people already in Australia who arrived on temporary visas or in an unauthorised manner, and who claim Australia's protection.

The total quota of 12,000 places under the humanitarian program was increased to 13,000 in the current financial year.

Offshore Resettlement

In recent times, the refugee component of the offshore resettlement program has made 4,000 places available for refugees to be resettled from offshore for those identified by UNHCR.

In the 2002–03 program year a total of 12,525 visas were granted under the Humanitarian Program. This comprised 11,656 offshore grants and 869 onshore grants.

The offshore resettlement program comprises two categories of permanent visa and two categories of temporary visa.

Permanent offshore humanitarian visa categories

1. Refugee visas are for people who are subject to persecution in their home country and who are in need of resettlement. The majority of applicants considered under this category are identified by UNHCR and referred by UNHCR to Australia. The Refugee visa category includes Refugee, In-country Special Humanitarian, Emergency Rescue and Women at Risk sub-categories.
2. The Special Humanitarian Program (SHP) is for people outside their home country who are subject to substantial discrimination amounting to gross violation of human rights in their home country. A proposer (known as sponsor under the Migration Program) who is an Australian citizen, permanent resident or eligible New Zealand citizen, or an organisation that is based in Australia, must support applications for entry under the SHP.

Temporary offshore humanitarian visa categories

Most asylum seekers who arrive by sea come from Indonesia and then sail either to Christmas Island, The Ashmore Reef or the Cocos Islands. The Australian government changed the area that was considered Australia for migration purposes and these islands were removed from the "migration zone".

People who arrive on one of these islands will only be allowed to apply for a secondary movement offshore visa.

Secondary Movement Offshore Entry – Subclass 447. Persons found to be refugees in an excised Australian territory, such as Christmas Island or a third country such as Nauru may be relocated to Australia on one of these Temporary Protection Visas. This group will never be entitled to permanent residence and thus never be allowed to sponsor their immediate families to come to Australia. They will remain on rolling 3 year TPVs.

Secondary Movement Relocation – Subclass 451. Persons who are in a transit country, such as Indonesia, and are found to be refugees by UNHCR, may be relocated to Australia on one of these TPVs. This is a five-year visa after which they may be able to apply for a permanent visa.

Onshore Protection

Each year several thousands of people already in Australia make applications for protection (refugee status).

In recent times the special humanitarian off shore program and the onshore protection program (including protection visas applied for in Australia) have been linked so that combined they amount to about 8,000 places, out of the total 12,000 quota.

A notional 700 places have been set aside to meet possible needs for protection visas in Australia and it is expected that over 7,000 places will be available for resettlement under the SHP.

Permanent onshore humanitarian visa category

1. Permanent Protection Visa – Subclass 866 – for persons who arrived in Australia with documentation and who have been staying in the Australian community and found to be refugees.

Temporary offshore humanitarian visa categories

1. Temporary Humanitarian Concern Visas – Subclass 786 – are to enable former Safe Haven Visa holders in need of continuing medical attention to remain in Australia for a further three years.
2. Temporary Protection visas – Subclass 785 – are for people who have arrived by unauthorised means without documentation by sea or air and found to be refugees. They are able to access only a three-year temporary visa, in the first instance. A person still needing protection after three years may apply for a further protection visa, which may be another TPV or a Permanent Protection Visa (PPV).

Changes to the migration legislation, made on 27 September 2001, affected refugees who were granted TPVs and who make further protection visa applications. They became unable to access a PPV if, since leaving their home country, they have resided for at least seven days in a country where they

“could have sought and obtained effective protection”. However, they can receive a further TPV if there is a continuing need for protection.

Any TPV holders who did not reside for at least seven days in a country where they could have sought and obtained effective protection, and those TPV holders who applied for a further Protection Visa before 27 September 2001, will continue to have access to the PPV after 30 months, if they are assessed as still in need of protection.

Compared to Permanent Protection visa holders, TPVs have restricted access to Centrelink and other Government services, and are not able to leave the country or to bring their family to Australia like other refugees.

The differences in entitlements are shown in the following table.

	Permanent Protection Visa	Temporary Protection Visa
Centrelink	Immediate access to full range of social security benefits.	Access only to Special Benefits for which a range of eligibility criteria apply. Work test imposed. Ineligible for Newstart, Sickness Allowance and a range of benefits.
Education	Same access to education as other permanent residents.	Access to school education, subject to State policy. Effective exclusion from tertiary education due to imposition of full fees..
Settlement Support	Access to full range of DIMIA settlement support services.	Not eligible for most DIMIA funded services including Migrant Resource Centres and ethno-specific welfare centres.
Family Reunion	Ability to bring members of immediate family (spouse and children) to Australia.	No family reunion rights including reunion with spouse and children and parents (if unaccompanied minors).
Work rights	Permissions to work, Full access to Commonwealth funded employment services.	Permission to work but ability to find employment severely limited by temporary nature of visa and poor English skills. Access to Centrelink touch screens only.
Language training	Access to 510 hours of English language training through AMEP. Access to translating and Interpreter Services.	No access to federally funded English language program: Adult Migrant English Program. Ineligible for translating and interpreting services.
Travel	Ability to leave the country and return without jeopardising their visa.	No automatic right of return if they leave the country.
Housing	Access to on-arrival accommodation programs.	Not entitled to on-arrival accommodation assistance.

7. CASE STUDIES

Compiled by Julian Burnside QC

Is This Decent Treatment?

Detention centres

The Baxter detention centre, four hours north-west of Adelaide, opened in August 2002.

Stand outside, facing east: the view is a perfect Fred Williams landscape of dull grey-green scrub on red sand, stretching away undimmed for miles to a rim of hills.

Turn and face west: a 6-metre high electric fence which stretches away into the distance; 20 metres of no-man's land, then another tall and glittering line of wire and mesh; inside the second fence, a series of compounds made of uncompromising corrugated iron. The compounds are so designed that the inmates have no view except of the sky; more importantly, no-one outside can see those locked inside.

Getting into Baxter is a long process: one week's notice; fill out a form, show appropriate ID. You are then escorted to an electronically controlled gate. Through the gate and into a metal cage. After a time – five, ten, twenty minutes – the gate at the other end of the cage opens and you can enter a small demountable cabin; there you are searched and scanned; another security air-lock and you are escorted across to the visitors' compound where you find the real tragedy, our hidden shame. Asylum seekers walk around as if still alive; they talk as if they still have a hold on rational thinking.

They press hospitality on you: an irrepressible cultural instinct, like the unwilling twitching of a dying animal. But they are not wholly there: they are hollowed out, dried, lifeless things, washed up and stranded beyond the high-water mark. Their minds are gone: shredded, destroyed by hopelessness and despair. Children are incontinent from stress; many inmates are afflicted with blindness or lameness, which has no organic origin: the bewildered mind's final, mute protest.

Mr Ruddock announced Baxter as Australia's "family-friendly" detention centre. Presumably that deceit was intended to distract our conscience. It is difficult to get there, so most Australians rely on the government's blandishments for their understanding of how we treat asylum seekers.

Mr Howard has made it clear that the mandatory detention system, and the iniquitous Pacific Solution, are designed to "send a message". What does this mean? It means that we treat innocent people harshly to deter others. The punishment of innocent people to shape the behaviour of others is impossible

to justify. It is the philosophy of hostage-takers. Any society which is prepared to brutalise the innocent in order to achieve other objectives has stepped into a moral shadow-land.

Indefinite detention

Mr Al-Kateb, a stateless Palestinian, arrived in Australia a few years ago, sought asylum, was refused refugee status and remained in detention. Like all asylum seekers, he has not committed any offence by coming here and asking for our help. Section 196 of the Migration Act says that an 'unlawful non-citizen' who is detained must remain in detention until (a) they are given a visa or (b) they are removed from Australia. The problem was that there is no other country he is entitled to go to. So, he had been refused a visa, and he could not be removed from Australia. In those circumstances, the Federal government argued that it was entitled to keep him in detention for the rest of his life.

The High Court of Australia has recently accepted the government's argument that, where a person has been refused a visa but cannot be removed from the country, the government can hold that person in detention for the rest of his/her life.

Solitary confinement

Officially, solitary confinement is not used in Australia's detention system. Officially, recalcitrant detainees are placed in the Management Unit. The truth is that the Management Unit at Baxter is solitary confinement bordering on total sensory deprivation. The cells in Baxter's Management Unit are about 3 metres square, with a mattress on the floor. There is no other furniture; the walls are bare. A doorway, with no door, leads into a tiny bathroom. The cell has no view outside; it is always lit. The occupant has nothing to read, no writing materials, no TV or radio; no company yet no privacy because a video camera observes and records everything, 24 hours a day. The detainee is kept in the cell 23 hours a day. For half an hour a day he is allowed into a small exercise area where he can see the sky.

No court has found him guilty of any offence; no court has ordered that he be held this way. The government insists that no court has power to interfere in the manner of detention. Typically, people are held in solitary confinement for several weeks at a time. There are cases of detainees being held in solitary for more than 10 weeks.

Sent back to torture or death

When people ultimately fail in their claim for protection visas, the Migration Act requires that they be "removed from Australia". In practice, that often means that they will be returned to their country of origin. At the present time there are approximately 200 Iranian asylum seekers in Australia's detention centres who have been refused protection visas. A number of those people live in genuine terror of the prospect of being returned to Iran. The reason for their terror is not difficult to find. Many of them have embraced Christianity, and

apostasy is a very serious offence in Iran; others of them belong to minor religious groups whose members are regularly subjected to terrible treatment in Iran. Recent reports on conditions in Iranian prisons make it clear that prisoners in Iran are treated with unrivalled cruelty: torture is standard, disappearances and murders are common.

An Iranian, whose claim for asylum had been rejected, lives in fear of return to these conditions. He applied to the court for orders preventing the Government from returning him to Iran. The Australian Government argued that it does not matter that he will be killed when he is returned; it does not matter that he will be tortured when he is returned; nevertheless the Government has the power and the obligation to return him to the place where that will happen.

Is This Fair Process?

Fatimeh (not her real name) arrived in Australia from Iran in mid-1999. She converted to Christianity in early 2000, and began preaching against Islam. She was baptised in August 2000, after the Department of Immigration lifted its ban on baptism in detention. In late August, Hussein (not his real name) an Iranian man held in the same detention camp, left Australia voluntarily and returned to Iran. Hussein informed on Fatimeh. Her family in Iran contacted her to tell her she was in great danger if she returned to Iran. Preaching against Islam is a serious offence in Iran. If she returned she faced the prospect of being stoned to death.

A central fact in Fatimeh's claim for asylum was that Hussein had returned to Iran and informed on her. Five witnesses gave evidence that Hussein had been in the camp at the relevant time, and that he had taken some of Fatimeh's writings with him when he returned to Iran. No witness contradicted that evidence. Fatimeh told the RRT Hussein's camp number and his boat number. She asked the RRT to check on Hussein to dispel any doubt about this part of her claim.

The RRT found, as a fact, that Hussein did not exist. The tribunal member found, as a fact, that Hussein's existence had been fabricated by Fatimeh and her witnesses in order to fortify her claim for asylum.

When the case came to be reviewed in Court, a subpoena to the Department produced documents which showed not only that Hussein existed, but that he had been in the camp exactly when Fatimeh said he had, and that he left for Iran exactly when she said he had.

The tribunal member had not bothered to ask the Department whether they had a record of Hussein. That casual indifference would very likely have led to Fatimeh's death. When the decision came on for review in court, the Department argued that the decision should not be overturned. It appeared not to trouble the RRT or the Department that, if Fatimeh were returned to Iran, she would almost certainly be stoned to death.

Openness And Accountability?

A family arrived in this country from a middle-eastern country in early 2001. They were members of a religious minority who have been traditionally oppressed, much in the same way as the Jews were oppressed in Europe historically, and more floridly from the 1920s to the 1940s. This group is regarded as unclean by the religious majority.

The family fled after a shocking episode in which one of their daughters suffered grievously and the authorities offered no help whatever. They arrived in Australia and ended up in a desert camp. There, over the next 14 months, the condition of the family deteriorated inexorably.

Mother and father, eleven-year-old daughter, seven-year-old daughter gradually getting worse and worse until the Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service became aware of the problem. They sent a psychologist to speak to the family and wrote an astounding report in which, amongst other things, they say of this child:

She refuses to engage in self-care activities such as brushing her teeth. She has problems with sleeping; tosses and turns at night; grinds her teeth; suffers from nightmares. She has been scratching herself constantly. She doesn't eat her breakfast and other meals and throws her food in the bin. She is preoccupied constantly with death, saying 'do not bury me here in the camp. Bury me back in Iran with grandmother and grandfather'.

She carried a cloth doll, the face of which she had coloured in blue pencil. When asked in the interview if she'd like to draw a picture, she drew a picture of a bird in a cage with tears falling and a padlock on the door. She said she was the bird.

After a number of pages to similar effect the writer observed:

It is my professional opinion that to delay action on this matter will only result in further harm to this child and her family. The trauma and personal suffering already endured by them has been beyond the capacity of any human being.

The report urged that the family be transferred from the desert camp to a metropolitan camp where at least they would get proper clinical attention, which the eleven-year-old desperately needed. No action was taken, and a month later the psychologist wrote another report trenchantly criticising ACM and DIMIA for keeping the family in the desert instead of somewhere where they could get something like appropriate help.

Eventually they relented and the family was brought across to one of the metropolitan camps. However, on a Sunday night at about 8.00pm, when the mother, father and sister were out of the room having their dinner, the eleven-year-old hanged herself. She did not die, and when they found her and had taken her down, she swallowed shampoo, and that didn't kill her. So she and her mother were taken to the emergency ward of the local hospital where she

was put into intensive care straight away. The lawyer who had been looking after their refugee application heard about this and went to the hospital at about 8.30pm or 9.00pm on a Sunday. He went to the ACM guard who was there – guarding them in the intensive care unit for God’s sake, as if they were about to make a run for it. The lawyer didn’t need to introduce himself because he is well known at the Detention Centre. He asked to see them and was told: ‘No you may not, because lawyers’ visiting hours are nine to five’.

The Refugee Review Tribunal

The RRT members do not have to be lawyers. The Migration Act does not prescribe any particular qualifications for membership of the Tribunal. They are appointed for a short term but can be re-appointed. If their decisions please the government, their chances of re-appointment appear to improve. No doubt most members of the RRT are good and conscientious people. But it is impossible to overstate the impact of the framework within which they operate. In an article in the *Washington University Law Quarterly*², Stephen Legomsky strongly criticized the pressure to which the RRT was subject. He wrote:

“In December 1996, the ... RRT ... which hears appeals from the Immigration Department’s denials of asylum, decided two controversial cases. In each, a woman sought asylum on the basis of spousal abuse that her government was either unable or unwilling to prevent. Both women argued that they met the legal definition of “refugee”; the Department argued they did not. The RRT, following the lead of Canada and the United States, approved the claims, rejecting the position of the Immigration Department. My own view is that the issue is one on which reasonable minds could disagree and have disagreed. Much more important, though, is what happened next.

The Minister’s reaction was to publicly chastise the two RRT members who had handed down the decisions. In an interview with *The Australian*, Mr Ruddock was quoted as saying, “[t]he view I take would be if there are tribunal members who have fixed term appointments who clearly make decisions outside the international law in relation to determining refugee claims, their appointments would be ones I would be highly unlikely to renew.” The newspaper then added, “[b]ut he denied he was threatening particular members.” The *Canberra Times* then reported the next day, that a spokesman had confirmed the Minister’s comments and had said Mr. Ruddock had “made it clear that members of the RRT would not be reappointed if they made decisions that went beyond the law.” (Emphasis added).

2. 76 Wash. U. L.Q. 243; Spring 1998

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8. TAKING COMMUNITY ACTION

Taking Community Action And Influencing Change³

Before joining an existing group, starting a new one or developing an individual or group campaign, you need to ask yourself a number of questions. For example:

What do you want to achieve?

Why is the issue/activity important to you and why should it be important to others?

Who else might be affected by or interested in your issue and activity? (Neighbours, council, local politicians (Local/State/Federal), existing groups, government departments, shopkeepers, professionals, the media)?

By going through this exercise you'll quickly get an understanding of the task ahead. By knowing what you want to achieve you will be able to decide on the best course of action – to either join an existing group or campaign that shares your concerns or interests, to recruit others to form a new group or campaign, or to take individual action.

Forming A New Group Or Committee

There are a number of ways of forming a group or committee. Depending on the issue, it may involve talking to people in your street, contacting others you believe may be affected, putting a poster up at your local shopping centre, community centre or library, getting a story in the local media, writing a letter to the editor or taking out an advertisement.

Early in the life of the group, you will need to:

Develop a clear set of objectives

Assess the group's combined strengths and skills gaps

Allocate tasks and responsibilities

Elect a chairperson or president, treasurer and secretary – you may also need to decide on who will be the group's spokesperson

Form sub-committees to tackle particular actions (e.g. media, legal etc)

Develop an action plan, including strategies for achieving the group's objectives.

3. Taken from How To Influence Change in Your Community, Cookson Madden & Associates & City of Hume.

Whether the group is large or small, it is important to give everybody the opportunity of contributing and giving everybody something to do.

Developing Your Group's Mission

An effective group or organisation needs a list of clear and specific objectives, and a strategy for achieving them. The best way to develop these is to answer a series of questions, such as:

What do you want to achieve?

This will help you develop a clear statement of the issues and objectives.

Why do you want to achieve these objectives?

This should provide you with the arguments in favour of your position.

What are the alternatives or arguments against what you are doing?

This will provide you with the arguments of and the response to your opponents. (This is an opportunity to play 'devil's advocate')

Who are your potential supporters and allies?

This will provide you with a list of people you will need to approach to test and/or get their support.

Who are the key decision makers?

This will provide you with the list of people you need to influence.

How can you most effectively get your message across?

This will provide a list of suggestions about how you can effectively communicate what you want to do. The answers to this question will depend on the answers to the previous two questions in particular. The method of communication will depend on whom you need to reach.

What problems do you face and how can they be overcome?

This will give you a good idea of the time, effort and resources required for success.

Are there any key dates or timelines you need to consider?

This will give deadlines to work to and an understanding of the sense of urgency required.

What is it going to cost?

By now you will have suggested a range of actions, some of which will have costs associated with them. For example, the printing of brochures, stationery etc.

Everybody in the group should be encouraged to contribute to this process and all ideas, thoughts and suggestions should be noted. The process of developing an action plan provides the opportunity to refine and prioritise the issues and objectives.

Assessing The Group

The bringing together of a group of people brings together different skills and attributes. It is important to know what those skills and attributes are so they can be harnessed effectively to achieve the objectives of the group. For example you will need to consider the following:

Does the group represent all of those who may be affected by the issue?

Does it have the right mix of skills and if not how do you get them?

Are you re-inventing the wheel – are there other groups already doing what you want to do? What resources does the group have – computers, faxes, access to Internet etc.

Remember, successful groups open up possibilities for everyone in the management and activities of the group.

The answers to these questions will directly affect the strategies you develop to achieve your objectives.

Electing Office Bearers Or Group Leaders

Every group needs to elect people who are able to take on the following 'leadership' roles – chairperson or president, secretary, treasurer and group spokesperson. (Later in the notes we will discuss issues around leadership and group roles.)

The key role of the chairperson or president is to organise meetings and make sure they are run effectively; that views can be heard and that decisions are made. The chairperson is also responsible for setting the agenda for the meetings. This is generally done in consultation with other office bearers and members of the group.

The key role of the secretary is to keep records of everything the group does by taking minutes of meetings, documenting decisions and actions and circulating this information to all members.

The key role of the treasurer is to look after the finances of the group, to oversee fundraising activities and to pay any bills.

The group may also need to elect or appoint people to other positions or sub-committees to look after specific issues. These may include media and publicity, liaison with other community groups, fundraising, membership, legal issues etc. This will become clearer during the development of the 'action plan'.

Developing An Action Plan

The process of developing an action plan will help get agreement on what the group wants to achieve and how best to achieve it. It means building on the preliminary work of the group and deciding on the most appropriate and effective course or course of action. It is important to realise that 'action plans'

are 'living' documents. They need to be reviewed regularly, and changed and adapted if needed, depending on the progress of the group.

As a group you have already considered the following:

- A clear statement of the issues and objectives

- The arguments you will use in favour of your position

- The arguments of your opponents and your response

- The methods for getting your message across

- A list of the problems you face and methods of overcoming them

- A list of potential supporters and allies

- A list of targeted key decision makers

- Key dates and timelines

- An assessment of costs

- A list of actions or tasks to be completed.

This in effect was the group's draft action plan.

Now it is time to form an action committee to refine, finalise and prioritise the work that has been done and to allocate responsibilities and tasks. This is where and how the strategy is put together and implemented.

The action committee should not be too big and should include people with skills in the particular areas required. Involvement in the campaign can be broadened by forming sub-committees, led by people from the action committee.

The first task of the action committee should be to finalise the action plan or strategy. The ideas generated during the development of the draft plan and the list of tasks should be discussed again before being prioritised or discarded. The group should strive for consensus on each of the areas.

An action checklist should be developed which details the action to be taken, the name of the person or sub-committee responsible for the action, the timeline for the action, its expected cost and the outcome. An action list may include tasks such as further research on the group's arguments, legal issues, a membership drive, fundraising drive, the drafting of letters etc. You may decide to form a fundraising sub-committee, or a membership subcommittee. You may give someone the task of recruiting people with the skills you need, for example, a lawyer.

An effective campaign needs clear objectives, good communication and information and willingness by all involved to speak constructively about the progress and problems being made or faced by the group. It is also important as an individual and as a group, not to promise something you know you can't

deliver. Members of the action committee should be in regular contact or meet regularly to review progress.

It is also important to spread the workload and build a sense of achievement by allocating tasks to as many members of the group as practicable.

The work of the action group and its sub-committees should be reported back to members for information and feedback.

The Many Elements Of A Campaign

There are many tasks involved in any campaign – these may include one or all of the following:

Street stalls

Telephone trees (where one person contacts five other people, and each one of those contacts another five)

Advertising, banners, placards, stickers, brochures and pamphlets

Demonstrations, blockades, protests or boycotts

Petitions

Letter-writing campaigns

Press releases

'Behind the scenes' persuasion or pressure

Door knocking

Letter-box drops

Media liaison and media stunts

Standing for election

Public meetings

Membership drive.

9. EFFECTIVE MEETINGS

The Keys To A Good Meeting

Everyone has experienced meetings that have left them dissatisfied. Your local library will have many guides to meeting procedure. They will provide checklists of Australian (and international) standard meeting rules and standing orders for a wide range of formal meetings. It is always useful to have someone in the group who is aware of the formal procedures. There is also a view that in many community situations, these formal rules can work to restrict involvement, and that more process-oriented styles are appropriate. Talking and acting together is often as important as formal meeting procedures.

A useful starting place is to ask yourself what makes an effective meeting. Eileen Guthrie and Warren Sam Miller have proposed the following:

- People leave feeling satisfied

- People leave looking forward to the next meeting

- Everyone agrees that something got done

- Lots of people came and on time

- People stayed until the end

- Decisions are understood

- There is discussion of both facts and feelings about issues

- People have an opportunity to use their skills and to develop new ones

- Conflicts are dealt with and not avoided

- Rewards are handed out during the meeting, as, for example, when a person is thanked for a job well done.

Preparation is the key to an effective meeting. In preparing for a meeting:

- Advise people in advance

- Select a time that is convenient for the members and a location that suits

- Have an agenda

- Consider the physical arrangements of the room, and services such as tea and coffee, car parking, security, and audio-visual aids

- Keep it interesting – think of ways to involve people

- Think of ways to help the group be aware of how it is going

- Manage the things that should happen between meetings and behind the scenes

Share the responsibility

Most importantly have an agenda – meetings must be called for a reason and with the expectation of achieving something.

Dealing With Conflict - And Other Common Problems

Conflict in groups is inevitable. It is a natural result of diversity. It can be constructive. Constructive conflict can energise, stretch and help people think 'outside the square'. Destructive conflict can injure a group, prevent it achieving its goals and can lead to the disintegration of the group.

A group's long-term effectiveness is often determined by the sensitivity of group members and leaders to the kinds of problems that groups generate. Every group has members who don't listen, members who focus on their own needs and leaders who sometimes push their way through the decision-making process. These are often the beginnings of conflict unless the group understands them and is prepared to deal with these matters rationally.

The best way to avoid negative conflict and to deal with conflict is to diagnose and work on these group problems. Effective group dynamics include the need to:

- Gain commitment to the wider group goals
- Create a free flow of relevant and valid information
- Create norms and procedures for decision making and conflict resolution
- Generate respect for the differences in the group.

Kinds of conflict

There are four basic kinds of conflict:

- Disagreement about questions of fact
- Disagreement about the goals of the group
- Disagreements over methods, procedures, strategies and tactics
- Disagreements over values, ethics.

The first task in conflict resolution is to understand the nature of the conflict. The leader, a group member, or the group as a whole can then use the appropriate problem-solving, negotiation, or arbitration strategies to find an acceptable resolution.

All of us who work in groups should try to identify our defensive and constructive behaviour. Eileen Guthrie and Warren Sam Miller suggest the following advice for managing conflict:

- Recognise that a conflict exists
- Acknowledge to the group that a conflict exists

Diagnose the conflict

Identify individual needs or wants

Identify mutually exclusive needs or wants

Identify areas of agreement

Develop a plan to act on areas of agreement and do it.

Of course, one other way of avoiding conflict has been suggested – keep everyone busy by giving them jobs to do.

10. CAMPAIGN STRUCTURES

Local Campaign Structures

If you are planning to run a local campaign, all of the functions listed below are required. One person may perform one or more of the functions. The team should be chosen because they have the time, ability and enthusiasm for the job. Please note: during an election campaign certain rules overseen by the Australian Electoral Commission apply to participating organizations. Contact the AEC for further information.

Campaign spokesperson

- Meets local opinion leaders
- Meets voters
- Does media appearances
- Maximizes opportunities.

Campaign organiser

- Structures the campaign
- Designs the strategy
- Executes the strategy
- Needs to become familiar with the Australian Electoral Act.

Local/regional campaign organisers

Any campaign may require the establishment of geographically-based campaign directors with the responsibility of organising local workers/volunteers etc. This is a way of sharing the load.

Treasurer/fundraiser

- Handles financial matters
- Organises fundraising and other resources, e.g. computers etc.

Administrative officer

- Organises campaign office
- Trains volunteers
- Arranges campaign activities – public meetings, media events etc.

Media officer

- Maintains the organisation's media profile
- Designs media tactics
- Monitors progress.

Research and information officer

- Assesses target groups
- Monitors issues
- Assesses the success of the program.

Campaign workers

Volunteers and supporters are vital to the grass roots campaign.

The campaign organiser is an organiser, motivator, and leader. Must have a broad range of skills, but also be prepared to delegate. Must be prepared to make decisions, and possibly mistakes, rather than make no decision at all. The campaign director is responsible for bringing it all together – developing and implementing the campaign. The key is the development of a long-term campaign plan, and during an election, a 33-day election plan.

If the campaign includes an election period, the campaign director must be familiar with the Australian Electoral Act.

Research and information officer needs to know the issues, the nature of the challenge, the people to persuade and how many etc. There is a lot of research to do, and a team effort is required.

Some of the questions:

- Who/how many currently support you?
- Who/how many can be persuaded?
- How can you persuade them?
- What is the age profile of the electorate?
- Which age profile is likely to support you?

Where to get information:

General

Census statistics (electoral rolls are available only to political parties), local newspapers, libraries, local community groups, contacts etc.

Hansard (through the Parliament website)

The Internet.

Electoral profile

ABS, the Australian Municipal Information Service, Australian Government Publishing Service, any local surveys, enquiries, reports

Electoral maps are obtainable from the ABS or the Divisional Electoral Office (at little cost) – use the map to plot areas in relation to age-profile, occupation, nationality, religion, young families, and education

Mark churches, shopping centres, hospitals, industrial areas, housing estates, other relevant areas.

Try to develop as complete a picture of the electorate as possible.

Candidate research

Compile information on all the candidates – what they have said, what their policies are, what they haven't said etc – update continuously.

Campaign history

Establish a system to collect and collate all relevant articles, items, and transcripts from all media.

Community directory

Major firms and businesses, including key personnel, size, products

Schools and colleges

Churches and clergymen etc

Ethnic groups

Other community organisations and centres

Sporting clubs, licensed clubs, conservation groups

Resident action groups

Local government bodies, councillors, office bearers

Hospitals and nursing homes

Police and fire stations

Media – names of all media, editors, journalists, editorial deadlines

List of any special events and the dates.

Policy

Policy document and supporting material.

11. LETTER WRITING AND LOBBYING

Letter Writing

(Julian Burnside QC)

The suggested questions in this section are examples of questions that supporters may individually wish to pursue with candidates. They should not be confused with the candidate questionnaire or survey, which is discussed at the end of this kit.

The Prime Minister, Mr Howard, the former Minister for Immigration, Mr Ruddock and the current Minister for Immigration, Senator Vanstone, take the praise and criticism for Australia's refugee policy.

However ALL Federal politicians are responsible for it, unless they actively oppose it.

Many Federal politicians do not know the facts about our refugee policy and most have not confronted the moral issues raised.

One way to ensure that they do is to write to them, asking very simple, focussed questions and then pressing for an answer. Pressing for a timely answer is crucial. They will not want to answer: rather, they will respond with bureaucratic fog in the hope that you will go away. However, it is important that you persist.

Tips for writing to federal politicians

Ask one question (two at the most).

Keep the letter short.

Do not make speeches or offer opinions.

(A sample letter is attached. Just insert your chosen question.)

You are likely to get a wordy or evasive answer. Read it carefully. If it does not actually answer your question, write again pointing out politely that they have not answered the question. Repeat the question and ask for an answer. Repeat this process as often as necessary.

If you get an answer, write asking another question and repeat the above process.

(A sample is attached.)

Remain polite and keep letters brief. This makes evasions all the more evident. Remember, repeated refusal to answer a simple question carries its own story. Write often enough to get you through the list of questions.

Keep copies of all letters: yours and theirs. Once you have completed correspondence on a question, feel free to send copies to Julian Burnside at 205 William St Melbourne VIC 3000. If you can make a list of responses and send that as well, it will simplify the task of collating responses.

Finding federal politicians' addresses for correspondence:

House of Representatives:

<http://www.aph.gov.au/house/members/index.htm>

Senate:

<http://www.aph.gov.au/Senate/senators/index.htm>

You can write to one or other of: your local member, relevant Ministers, the Prime Minister, other party leaders. If you write to more than one, compare the answers. If there are discrepancies or you are not satisfied write a letter to your local paper and let your friends and colleagues know.

Letter writing guide

Summary of responses received by _____ [your name]

Question No.	Parliamentarian name	Answered Yes	Answered No	Did not answer question	Did not respond to letter

Sample Questions

Do you believe it is right to imprison innocent children?

Do you believe it is right to imprison innocent women?

Do you believe it is right to imprison innocent people?

Should asylum seekers in Australia be treated:

- a) humanely?
- b) decently?
- c) fairly?

In your opinion, are asylum seekers in Australia treated:

- a) humanely?
- b) decently?
- c) fairly?

Do you consider that people who arrive in Australia informally and seek asylum should be called “illegals”?

Do you believe that people commit an offence by arriving in Australia without permission and seeking asylum? If Yes, what offence do they commit?

Do you believe that people who arrive in Australia informally and seek asylum should be detained?

Do you believe that people who arrive in Australia informally and seek asylum should be detained indefinitely?

Do you believe that Courts should be denied the power to order the release on bail of people who arrive in Australia informally and seek asylum and who are detained?

Do you believe the Refugee Review Tribunal should be legally required to determine cases fairly?

Do you believe Courts should be prevented from overturning unfair decisions of the Refugee Review Tribunal?

Do you believe Australia’s policy of indefinite mandatory detention of asylum seekers is:

- a) necessary?
- b) humane?
- c) decent?
- d) fair?

Initial letter:

Dear

I am concerned about Australia’s refugee policy and human rights record.

I am a voter in the electorate of _____.

I have a question: {insert chosen question}

I would be grateful for your response.

Yours faithfully,

_____ [name]

_____ [address]

Then, unless you get a clear answer to the question, a follow up letter:

Dear

Thank you for your letter of _____ [date].

Unfortunately, it did not answer my question.

My question was: {insert original question}

I would be grateful if you could answer it.

Yours faithfully,

_____ [name]

_____ [address]

Lobbying Politicians

Guidelines for lobbying MPs, Ministers and Senior Government Officials.

(Joan Staples © 2002-2003)

Pressure for change in the policy of indefinite mandatory detention of asylum seekers has to come from the grass roots. ChilOut encourages you to go and visit your member of parliament with your concerns. This pamphlet is designed to make the process easy for you and allow you to give us vital feedback from any meetings.

Seeing a senior government official or your local MP in a formal meeting may seem difficult for the first time. Following these simple points will help you make the most of your meeting.

Most importantly

Be yourself and believe in what you are doing.

You are an expert on your issue and your organisation. If you have to go to Parliament House or an impressive office, do not be intimidated by the surroundings. These buildings are simply offices not really much different from the offices you know at home.

Preparation

Clothes

Do not wear clothing which attracts attention to itself and gets in the way of your real message. You have only a short time with your local Member or the official and there is no time for distractions. Wear something in which you feel comfortable, but which is appropriate to the surroundings.

Numbers

At least two and no more than three is best for most occasions. More than three makes communication difficult. Two people allows for you to agree on what took place; for one person to watch and feel the nonverbal communication; for each of you to have time to think while the other is speaking and, if you feel the need to keep a record, it allows for one person to take notes.

Research

Familiarise yourself with the basic definitions of asylum seekers and refugees. Be aware of the common prejudices you may need to counter. The Facts versus Myths page on the ChilOut web site can help you here.

What to take

Photographs, diagrams, simple graphs can speak louder than words and a basic lobby document is a very good idea. However, it must be simple and short. Do not presume the person will know all about the issue and do not try to talk about too many ideas. The document should be no more than one or two A4 pages, clearly set out, stating what the issue is, the arguments being put forward, and your position on those arguments. It must contain the specific request you are making. If you are not involved in a particular issue already visit the ChilOut website (www.chilout.org/) to view our current campaigns. Alternatively, contact ChilOut directly to see what is topical.

You may provide detailed documents at the meeting or in advance. However, in most cases these are not read by the person you are seeing. They may be used by staffers or the Department.

When you get there

The interview

Ideally, you want to hear from your Member or the Minister as much as you speak yourself. Listen carefully to what they say. This will give you important clues – where to pitch your information – how much the person already knows, misunderstandings they have which you need to correct. If you are unsure how to proceed, follow the format of your lobby document, which you can leave with your MP or the Minister at the end of the interview.

Advisers

A staffer will probably be present. These are very important people for you. They often play a key role in controlling the advice to and from Ministers and MPs and helping with a heavy workload. You should note the name of the adviser, make sure that you keep them informed in the future and, if possible, develop a working relationship with them.

Be clear, pleasant and professional

Be yourself. Make your points simply and clearly. Do not get into an argument and never let a disagreement become personal. Stick to policy issues, but be firmly dignified if the MP or Minister becomes difficult. You never know when you may have to work with this person again.

Remember to

Listen for what they will do

Listen very carefully to what the person agrees to do. Often MPs and Ministers make statements that sound agreeable, but which really have no substance. If this is happening, you might like to try diplomatically suggesting some firmer action on their part. An undertaking from your local MP to write to the Minister on your behalf is one action for which you can ask. As soon as the meeting is over, check with your companion that you both agree on what the official has agreed to do.

Keep a united front and do not exceed your mandate

Always keep a united front with your partner. Do not give the official the opportunity to see any disagreements between you. If he/she wants to get you to agree on behalf of ChilOut to some new proposal, do not exceed your mandate. It is quite proper for you to say that you will take a new idea or proposal back to your organisation for a decision

Finally

Follow-up

If some key decisions are made, or if you feel the need for a formal record, you may like to follow up with a letter confirming the outcome of the meeting. Always make sure that anything you promise to do is followed up as quickly as possible!

Please let ChilOut know who you visit and how your meeting went.

Send an email to lobbying@chilout.org, go to the ChilOut website and follow the links to the lobbying page, or send a letter to our postal address listed below. The world of governments is not different from ordinary human relations, about which you already know a great deal. Sometimes the language may be more formal and the settings different, but you already have many of the skills you require from your living experiences. Being able to judge what motivates a person and how they are feeling and reacting are very relevant skills in lobbying. So, seize the opportunity to go lobbying, if you have the chance! The best way to develop your lobbying skills is to go and do it. So, good lobbying!

12. DEALING WITH THE MEDIA 1

(Jill Singer)

What can I do?

You can make an enormous difference. The Federal government's policy is based on opinion polls which suggest that the vast majority of Australians take a very hard line on people who arrive here uninvited and lodge claims for asylum – particularly when these people arrive here by boat.

Most of the popularly held views about asylum seekers and refugees are, however, not based on fact. They are based on prejudice. Psychologists note that people's immediate response to a situation is based on emotion – they then search for “facts” which help legitimise their feelings. It could well be that your own attitude toward asylum seekers and refugees is also based on emotion – that of compassion. While such a standpoint is laudable we need to encourage each other to primarily voice our views based on cold hard facts. The good news is, the more you find out about refugee policy, the more you will come to realise that the facts are with you – not only is Australia's refugee policy lacking compassion, it contravenes a number of international laws and conventions.

The Federal government also presents a raft of inaccurate information to the public to support its policy. Such inconsistencies and injustice need to be challenged – and the best people to challenge it are “ordinary” Australians. Why? Because your own life might be comfortable but it's certainly not for thousands of asylum seekers now living on Australian soil and in detention camps offshore. And it's important to remember that injustice anywhere threatens justice everywhere.

'Ordinary' voices are heard by politicians

People often feel that their own views aren't heard – that politicians only hear the voices of media heavyweights, celebrities and other politicians.

This is not the case.

Politicians are absolutely fixated on the views that Australians express – not just at the polls – but on talkback radio and the letters pages of newspapers. Most politicians start their days with a printed summary of the previous day's media coverage of issues that come into the orbit of their portfolios or specific areas of interest.

We can't all be out there everyday taking part in massive demonstrations – but we can express our viewpoint on radio and print.

Basic rules for writing letters to the editor

Keep it simple

You need to ensure your argument isn't convoluted and confusing. Let no one have any doubts about what it is you are saying.

Keep it short

Make every word a bullet – or face the consequences of seeing your letter edited so ruthlessly that it could well lose its original meaning and intent. (And yes, newspapers are entirely within their rights to edit your letter as they see fit.)

Avoid making wild statements

If you make a claim make sure you have the evidence to support it...otherwise you could end up with a truckload of egg on your face. And rest assured the government is monitoring the letters pages and will strenuously defend itself against criticism.

Be prolific

Regular readers of the letters pages will note the same old names turning up time and again. Why not make one of those names yours?

Send each letter to a number of publications

You've done the work – so try to maximise its effect. Send a copy of each letter you write to your local newspaper as well as The Australian (which is national) and all state based newspapers such as the Herald-Sun and the Age in Victoria. Women's magazines often have letters pages as well so consider trying to get a letter into these. Some politicians have claimed The Women's Weekly is the most powerful publication in the country so read it...if there is any article which touches on refugees in any way WRITE IN. (The addresses of newspapers (email, fax, post) and other publications as well as the particular rules they apply to letters are usually on the letters to the editor page.)

Talk-back radio

Talkback radio programs vary as much as those who present them. It is one thing to call in to John Laws and quite another to say, Sandy McCutcheon on ABC Radio National.

Stay calm

Most "shock-jocks" will try to bait you so DON'T TAKE THE BAIT. There's nothing that talkback hosts love more than someone who loses control and either sobs or becomes angry. They consider this great radio – but its not great for those who are trying to have their opinion heard. So even if you are abused do your best to stay calm.

Don't argue

If the talkback presenter tries to engage you in an argument simply say something like – “well, that may be your view – but I disagree because...” There is also nothing wrong with calmly correcting the presenter by saying something along the lines of “well, unfortunately you're wrong on that...but that's another matter...what I wanted to express my opinion about was ...” You might even consider saying “Sorry, I thought you were interested in your caller's views!...can you please let me speak?”

Share the task of monitoring radio

You might be a rusted-on ABC listener and loathe the thought of listening to commercial radio – but, hey, someone has to do it – and it is enormously influential. Share the load by organising a roster so that you rotate who listens to certain programs. As soon as the issue of asylum-seekers is mentioned, ring in. If the lines are open for any topic then ring in as often as you can.

Don't read a prepared speech

Nothing sounds worse than someone who calls into talkback radio and is obviously reading. By all means keep notes at hand to refer to – but don't read long screeds or you'll quickly lose your audience.

General tips

Be positive

Whether you are trying to place a story in the media or simply having your own voice heard, remember to emphasise the positives whenever possible.

Groups such as Rural Australians For Refugees have had outstanding media success by emphasising the vital role that asylum seekers and refugees play in regional Australia...stories such as football teams being revitalised/farmers whose productivity has jumped after employing refugees/small towns benefiting from doctors who came here as refugees etc.

If you hear of a good news story in your region – make sure it gets told – in your local paper, on local radio and further afield. (But first make sure the subject/s of your story is/are happy to have it told).

Don't let nerves get the better of you

Jumping up and down and making sure you get heard doesn't come easy for most people. But remember, even if you're nervous, press ahead because you won't sound like a dill – you'll just sound like a normal authentic individual who is concerned about something.

13. DEALING WITH THE MEDIA 2

Getting The Message Through

Good communication

Good communication, both internal and external, is vital to the success of any organisation or campaign. Social researcher, columnist and author, Hugh McKay has developed the following 10 commandments of communication:

1. It is not what our message does to the listener, but what the listener does with our message that determines our success as communicators.
2. Listeners generally interpret messages in ways that make them feel comfortable and secure.
3. When people's attitudes are attacked head on, they are likely to defend those attitudes and, in the process, reinforce them.
4. People pay most attention to messages that are relevant to their own circumstances and point of view.
5. People who feel insecure in a relationship are unlikely to be good listeners.
6. People are more likely to listen to us if we listen to them.
7. People are more likely to change in response to a combination of new experience and communication than in response to communication alone.
8. People are more likely to support change that affects them if they are consulted before the change is made.
9. The message in what is said will be interpreted in the light of how, when, where and by whom it is said.
10. Lack of self-knowledge and an unwillingness to resolve our internal conflicts make it harder for us to communicate with other people.

The communication challenge⁴

Today is the 'Information Age'. The advent of new technology has added to the list of the many 'media' in which your views, ideas, messages and information can be passed on to a broad, or indeed, select audience. For example: newspapers (local, metropolitan, national, international), AM/FM radio (community, metropolitan, talkback, national, international) magazines (mass, specialist), television (community, pay, free-to-air), internet (e-mail, websites), books, direct mail, speeches, videos, public speeches, journals, pamphlets, public speeches, private briefings, displays and exhibitions.

4. Taken from *How To Influence Change in Your Community*, Cookson Madden & Associates & City of Hume.

Despite the new technologies, the communication challenge remains the same:

Know what you want to say

How to say it

When to say it

Who you want to say it to and how to get to them, (that is how to get it reported)

What you want your 'audience' to do.

This should be sounding familiar – the questions you need to ask in relation to media are the same questions you need to ask when deciding on whether or not to get involved. If you have done the initial work, the 'action plan' becomes the basis for the letter to the editor, a media release and a media campaign.

Understanding the media

There is little public respect for the media and journalists. We have all heard people say 'never trust what you read in the newspapers, watch on the television or hear on the radio'. Journalists rank alongside prostitutes, car salespeople and politicians in surveys on public respect. Despite this, we continue to consume media in its variety of forms and for every vacancy in journalism there are hundreds, if not thousands, of applications.

When dealing with the media, it is important to understand who and what you are dealing with. The media, except for the ABC, is commercial – to survive, it must make a profit. Even the ABC is keen on ratings. For example, the amount of coverage stories get in the local media depends almost entirely on the amount of advertising the newspaper attracts. There is always a tension between the commercial and public interest roles in media organisations. The amount of advertising in various media depends on issues like circulation or ratings or how well it reaches a particular target audience. To effectively reach its target audience it must be seen to be credible by that audience.

Journalists and photographers are like anybody else. They have their prejudices and preferences. They crave peer respect and career advancement. Some journalists want to be personalities, stars or 'players' – they not only want to report but also want to have an impact. They face constant daily and weekly deadlines. They make mistakes. They prefer the 'scoop' or 'exclusive' story and generally do not like being pressured – they prefer to come to their own conclusions.

The media feeds off itself. Newspaper stories will often be taken up by the radio, television and vice versa. The 'news cycle', that is how the news is generated and reported, has become more complex and inter-related. A news story may be started by a press release to a newspaper or a telephone call to talkback radio. By the end of the 'cycle' all forms of media may have covered different aspects of the story. Public relations and media management has

become a major industry. A strategy that worked today may not work tomorrow. To add to the complexity, news is not always new. News can be information, it can be 'old news'. What is relevant today may not be relevant tomorrow. What is not relevant today may be relevant tomorrow, if circumstances change. To sum up, news:

Is relative

Has to be made before it can be gathered

Is generally better if it is bad, rather than good

Is not necessarily new and can be old.

However, in deciding whether something is news, a journalist will ask:

Is the information, action or policy unique, controversial or exceptional?

Does it, will it create conflict or debate?

Is it timely, does it contribute to an existing issue or debate?

How many people will it affect? Important people? Large numbers of people?

Can it be easily explained in words, pictures, graphics?

Do I have the story to myself?

Is it interesting/entertaining?

Have I got time to cover it?

The more your story meets these criteria, the greater the chance of it being reported.

The media release

A well-written media release is a key part of the successful use of the media.

The media release should communicate the key elements of your story – the what, why, how, who and when.

The planning phase of your campaign should provide the basis for your first release. In this planning phase you have already answered the above questions. The challenge now is to convert that into a media release.

Media release rules

There are some important rules to follow when writing a press release:

The most interesting or important issue or fact should come first

Keep one idea, fact or comment to a paragraph

Answer the five Ws – **Who** (said it/did it), **What** (did they say/do), **Why** (did they say /do it) **When** (did it take place), **Where** (did it/is it going to happen)

If possible keep the media release to a page

Don't use jargon – keep the language simple and understandable

Keep your verbs active, not passive (...will be the topic of discussion... becomes...will discuss)

Forget about adjectives and adverbs – write in simple and plain language

Make your quotes interesting and colourful – and always attribute them to somebody

Make sure it contains your name and/or the name of the group you represent, your position and relevant telephone numbers, including after hours numbers

Give your group or campaign a name, including a catchy acronym

Know your intended audience and make your release relevant to that audience.

Your media release should always be written in the form of a news story and meet the criteria of accuracy, structure, style and objectivity expected of any journalist. (You can introduce emotion and controversy through your quotes.)

You should also think 'pictures'. What picture or event can support the story of your media release?

Be aware of media deadlines. There is no point sending a media release just prior to a news bulletin or a newspaper deadline. Remember, local newspaper deadlines are often more than a week before publication. Magazines are often more than a month before publication.

Most importantly, be available for a follow-up or interview. If you are only available at particular times, say so. It may also be necessary to list a number of different people for media follow up, but make sure they have a copy of the media release.

Format

The media release should follow a simple formula:

The top of the page should list your group's name, address, fax, phone and e-mail numbers

The date of the release, or the date on which you want coverage should follow

If it is for immediate release, say so – if not say that it is embargoed till a certain date/time

The headline should be simple and factual

Leave a wide margin

If it goes over one page type “– more –” at the bottom of the page

Number the pages

Put the name of the person to contact for follow up and their details at the bottom of the release

Don't have sentences carry over from one page to the next.

The media release and the letter

The media release is an all-purpose document. It can be tailored to become a letter to the editor or a personal letter to key decision-makers. It can be the briefing note to work off when making a phone call to talkback radio or a journalist. With letters to the editor, it is best to keep them between 200–250 words. Always attach your name, address and telephone number. Make sure you can be contacted because the veracity of all letters is checked before publication. The media release can also provide the basis for a letter campaign, a poster, a brochure or an Internet site. You have got the information together, it is just a matter of tailoring it to the audience.

The action plan becomes the media release

The group's action plan provides the basis for the press release. Here's how:

1. A clear statement of the issues and objectives.

This provides the core of the release – it details the issue and what you want to do about it.

2. The arguments you will use in favour of your position

You've done your research and now have the arguments to support your position. This should include a consideration of a visual argument. That is, if it's for television, what's the best way of illustrating it?

3. The arguments of your opponents and your response

You've played 'devil's advocate' and now have the answers to the arguments your opponents may use and the questions a journalist may ask.

4. The methods for getting your message across

What is the best way of releasing this information/story? Press conference, faxed release? local paper? radio, television etc?

5. The problems you face and methods of overcoming them

Do you have the resources, skills etc to be effective? Do you have a comprehensive media list?

6. Your potential supporters and allies

You've identified your supporters and allies – can they come out in support of you and your position?

7. The targeted key decision makers

Have we contacted the media the decision makers take notice of?

8. Key dates and timelines to consider?

Have you timed the release for relevant media deadlines and any other relevant special event?

9. The preliminary assessment of costs/resource needs.

If this is a campaign, what is the strategy for the coming weeks – what is the next story? Have you got the time and resources to carry it through?

10. The actions or tasks that need to be completed.

Who is doing what? Make a list of who is responsible for ensuring the message gets through? Who is measuring the impact? How will the impact in turn impact on your strategy?

Getting coverage

With the media release written, the next step is to decide what to do with it.

For example, you may just want to send it to relevant local media by letter, fax or e-mail. You may want it to accompany a media conference, where you call all media to a particular venue to release the story.

However, there are other ways of getting your story covered. You may choose to ring a talkback program, the 'rumour file' or deal with a journalist directly.

The follow up

If the media are interested in your story, there are a number of ways they might follow up. They may want to get more information from you over the telephone. They may ask for a television or radio interview. They may want to send a photographer out to get a photograph. Again, in all these situations make sure you are prepared and comfortable. Make sure the photograph puts your story in a positive rather than negative light.

The interview

There are many types of interviews:

- You with a single journalist or broadcaster asking questions

- A formal or impromptu press conference involving many journalists

- A panel interview/discussion involving a combination of guests and journalists/interviewers

- Live and pre-recorded interviews.

Interviews can be confrontational or conversational and every interview has an agenda. The challenge is to make the agenda your agenda.

Dealing with a request for an interview

The preparation you have done for your action plan and the media release is the key to your success. You should not only know your own media release

well, but you should also have anticipated your answers to questions or issues that arise from the alternative arguments to the issue you are being interviewed about.

In preparing for the interview:

Prepare and rehearse your key messages

(Try and keep to no more than three key messages)

Make sure you have the facts and figures at your fingertips

Make sure you know what you DO NOT want to say

Have some anecdotes and stories ready to illustrate your story

Play devil's advocate – know the arguments against yours

Avoid jargon – speak in plain language

Pitch your message to the audience

Rehearse – go through a role-play with a friend or family member

If it involves a public appearance, dress appropriately.

People pay most attention to messages that are relevant to them, their experiences and their point of view.

When you are being interviewed, make sure you are comfortable and cannot be disturbed or distracted. If you are not comfortable, or need some extra time to prepare tell the journalist you will ring them back in a few minutes.

If it is an interview for radio, ask if it is for news (if so they will want shorter, punchier answers they can turn into 'grabs') or for other purposes, including current affairs or 'talkback' radio. These later types of interview are generally longer. A pre-recorded interview is an interview recorded before it goes to air. These are generally edited before they are broadcast. A 'live-to-air' interview can't be edited and if you're prepared for it, is easier for you to control.

Handling the interview

Be honest, sincere and enthusiastic. Don't tell half-truths or give false information. It will come back to haunt you. Remember what you say is only part of the communication. The way you say it is also important. Your voice and body language will also tell a story.

Keep control of the interview. If you have prepared well, you will know more than the journalist. And don't be distracted by the journalists line of questioning – keep coming back to the points you want to make e.g. "The real issue, as far as I am concerned is..."

Be aware of the time you have for the interview. This will determine your strategy and ability to get the message across.

Tape the interview or take notes at the end of the interview if possible for your own records or in case there is a dispute at a later stage.

Explain complex issues by comparing them to well-known icons or to people's everyday experience e.g. "the site is five times the size of the MCG...it involves one truck every three minutes..."

Always assess your performance.

If the interviewer becomes aggressive, maintain your cool and try not to alter the pace and tone of your voice.

If you need to challenge information, do so in a calm and considered manner.

If they raise issues of which you are not fully aware, say something like "I'm not aware of that information, but our research shows..."

If you get a difficult question, give yourself time to think...even ask for the question to be rephrased to give yourself extra time.

Watch and listen to interviews and television and radio...and rate them...why were they good or bad? why was the person believable/credible etc?

The importance of the grab

When it comes to television and radio news you will generally have no more than 30 seconds and sometimes only about seven seconds to tell your side of the story. That's 90 words at best, and sometimes no more than 20.

That's why it is important to keep the message simple and to the point.

Television and radio

Television and radio are mediums of impression. People take in the words and the impressions left by the speaker – confidence, lack of confidence, strength, vigour, knowledge credibility.

Research shows that when it comes to television for example, the vast majority of people are influenced not by the verbal content/choice of language, but by body and facial cues as well as the pace, volume, stress and pitch of the voice.

People are also influenced by the entertainment value of an interview or story – that is, they respond to people who are animated, lively, colourful, well-dressed etc and who can speak to their experience.

Looking confident and believable is more important than what you say.

Dress appropriately – for TV, don't let what you wear distract from the message. Avoid busy designs and patterns. Lighter colours will generally work better than darker ones. Ensure you are well groomed. Dress for the circumstances – a suit will look out of place in the forest, for example.

Project. For radio and television it is important to 'speak up'. The technology reduces the impact of your voice, so to overcome you need to raise your voice between 10 and 20 percent.

14. ORGANISING PUBLIC MEETINGS

This Section Focusses On Public Meetings With Candidates

There are various types of public meetings. Hall meetings, debates, seminars, coffee mornings, light lunches, afternoon teas, dinners, shopping centre visits, policy, discussion meetings, local campaign launches. Each has a different format and style. The great thing about public meetings is that they put the candidates on the spot. A failure to properly understand an issue or answer a question will have an immediate impact. The key to success is in the organising.

Some Tips

Once you have got your group organised with a clear statement of your issues and objectives:

Decide what type of public meeting you want. Your decision will be based on a number of factors, including funds and resources if you have to hire the venue etc, available appropriate venues and the number of people you think will come along.

Write to/telephone your local member and any other announced candidate, introduce the group and invite them to participate in the public meeting that you are proposing. While you may have a tentative date, don't lock into it – offer the candidates some flexibility – don't let them get away with saying no because the date doesn't suit.

Aim to lock in the sitting member first or the major alternative party candidate first. Once you have done that it will be harder for the other candidates to refuse.

If one, more or all of the candidates refuses, write a letter to the editor or issue a press release expressing your disappointment – then switch to Plan B (see later).

Organise Your Meeting Professionally:

- Pick a comfortable, accessible venue

- Ensure that there is a good sound system, seating for the candidates (at front of room or on stage etc), lectern, and appropriate catering

- Set the ground rules, e.g. the time that each candidate can speak, format for questions and answers, whether candidates can debate what each says, whether candidates can ask questions of other candidates, which questions should go to ALL candidates etc

- Ensure that the meeting is going to be run by an experienced chairperson

Cater for the media – make sure they are invited and if possible make sure the meeting suits the media deadlines

Publicise the meeting – make sure you have a budget to publicise your meeting and use your networks to get the word out

Record the meeting – what is said by each candidate may be important for the campaign.

Use the meeting to assess the candidates

Have a series of prepared questions and people in the audience ready to ask them

Always be fair and polite and don't play favourites with any of the candidates

(However, if candidates fail to show, for no good reason, consider leaving empty chairs in their stead).

Plan B

If your invitation hasn't been successful or if you haven't the resources to get a meeting organised, there are other things you can do:

Join with other local community groups to put forward a joint proposal for a community meeting.

Attend any other public meetings organised by another group or indeed by one or more of the candidates.

Find out the candidates' itineraries (from their campaign offices or if they won't tell you, the local media) and attend any public events so that you can ask questions or put your point of view.

CANDIDATE QUESTIONNAIRE OR SURVEY

The candidate questionnaire or survey covers a range of important refugee issues, including our reform policy. It is designed to test each candidate in the election (House of Representatives and Senate) on his or her commitment to refugee reform.

The results will be collated and the candidates ranked on the basis of their support for refugee reform. These rankings will then be published before Election Day. The questionnaire has not been included in this kit and is not available from the website.

If you are interested in using the questionnaire in your electorate, please contact us as soon as possible, and we will forward it to you.

Email: info@thejusticeproject.com.au

Telephone: (03) 9486 0640

Fax: (03) 9486 0670

Taking this extra step will help us monitor and coordinate distributing, collating and publishing the results.

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