

“STRANGE WORDS”

Refugee perspectives on government and media stereotyping

“Australians don’t know anything about asylum seekers; there’s no-one to tell them about us. They should go inside the detention centre and see the truth . . .”

AS THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT has debated its various critics over the issues of refugee and mandatory detention policies, one set of voices has rarely been heard. The effective silencing of refugees and asylum seekers in this country has been one of the more disturbing aspects of the debate as a whole.¹ Even academic studies have tended to impose their own intellectual agenda on the refugee debate,² with only a small number of these being conceived and constructed by the refugees themselves. In the study reported in this article, we interviewed a number of temporary protection visa (TPV) holders living in Melbourne, as part of a larger project documenting the personal narratives, experiences and journeys of TPV holders in Australia, who as asylum seekers experienced prolonged mandatory detention first hand. The primary objective of the project is to provide a forum for TPV holders to have their stories and experiences heard, in order to document and record their personal journeys. This collection will, we hope, facilitate a greater understanding of the experiences that led these TPV holders to seek political asylum in Australia. This essay focuses specifically on the emotional responses of TPV holders to the government-inspired stereotypes which represent them as ‘illegals’, ‘queue-jumpers’, ‘cashed-up immigrants’ and other dehumanising labels.

DEHUMANISATION

For several years now, the primary public labels employed to describe onshore asylum seekers have been those of ‘queue-jumpers’ and ‘illegals’.³ The term ‘queue-jumper’ has been particularly prominent in public discourse; a term designed to sug-

gest that onshore arrivals are undeserving—having taken a resettlement position from a more worthy (and certainly more grateful and compliant) ‘off-shore’ refugee. Playing upon notions of fairness and orderliness, Minister for Immigration Philip Ruddock has even likened onshore asylum seekers to “thieves” who “steal” places from genuine refugees. Despite the absence of any real ‘queue’ in receiving countries such as Pakistan, Iran and Indonesia,⁴ this language has been effective in depicting asylum seekers as a deviant group unworthy of protection.

These discourses of exclusion and denigration were reinforced throughout 2001–2, when a systematic pattern of government misrepresentation sought to portray asylum seekers as serial child-abusers.⁵ This was not limited to the most well-known and notorious case of the ‘children overboard’ incident. Other episodes include the claim made by Liberal senator George Brandis that “a potential illegal immigrant [had] attempted to strangle a child”. A subsequent Senate inquiry found that navy witness statements reportedly relating this alleged episode did not exist.⁶ In the case of the lip-sewing protests of Afghan hunger strikers, Government responses also involved unfounded accusations of child abuse.⁷ It was alleged that adult detainees had forcibly sewed the lips of children. Separate investigations by the South Australian Government and the Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission, with the cooperation of Australian Correctional Management, found no evidence of parents encouraging children to engage in acts of self-harm.⁸ This too was found to be an

unsubstantiated allegation, but a pattern or regime of misrepresentation was now apparent. Under pressure, or to gain electoral mileage out of their tough stance, the government appeared quite willing to portray asylum seekers as an irresponsible and aberrant group, hostile to Australian standards of decency and parental responsibility, with little regard for their children's wellbeing or safety.⁹

Meanwhile, Australia continues to be the only regime in the world with a mandatory detention policy applied to children, and continues to lock up young children in defiance of international treaty commitments on the rights of the child. Government rhetoric implicitly shifts the blame to the parents for putting their children in this situation. Despite a letter from Afghan detainees expressing their great offence at the baseless accusations of child abuse, and urging the Prime Minister to set the record straight,¹⁰ the government has refused to apologise.¹¹

'ILLEGAL'

At the heart of the 1951 Refugee Convention lies something of a legal paradox. While an asylum seeker with a well-founded fear of persecution landing in a signatory nation is legally entitled to protection, the convention places no obligation on nations to actually admit them, so that such a claim can be made.¹² In practice, signatory governments have had to manage this tension through immigration and asylum policy. Happily, most signatory nations have managed to do so, humanely, without turning these legal complexities into a populist wedge for political gain. Until recently, this was also true of Australia. But political choices have been made about onshore asylum seekers arriving by boat. Though their entry is by definition 'unauthorised', the political decision to label them 'illegal' is a disingenuous simplification, amounting to deliberate distortion of the issue. Making a claim for asylum in a signatory nation remains a lawful act. It should also be noted that Australia's punitive temporary protection policy for 'unauthorised' arrivals found to be refugees does not so easily slip between the cracks. The Convention specifically states that genuine refugees should not be penalised for their method of entry.¹³

'Hamid' made this point from the perspective of a refugee, now living in Melbourne:

I've heard about the legality issue since I was in the camp. What makes someone legal? Is it the international law or Australian law? I'm a legal asylum seeker according to the UN. According to their definition of asylum seeker, I'm a legal asylum seeker. Australia is trying to change that for other purposes.

For most refugees, these labels are hurtful and destabilising—especially while they are making the difficult cultural transitions that accompany resettlement in a new country. As 'Leila', an Iraqi refugee, puts it:

The Australian government looks at us as if we are criminals. We didn't commit any crimes; we came to Australia looking for freedom and peace . . . so why do they call us these names? When we were in the camp, the officers used to look at us like we were criminals . . . We left because of the criminal president [of Iraq]. We come to Australia and they call us criminals . . . is it possible for a child who is two, five or ten to be a criminal?

Along these lines, 'Hasan' goes one step further to suggest that:

These expressions that we hear from radio stations, newspapers, and other media increase the depression that we suffer . . . we came here to save our lives . . . all these expressions really hurt us. Every once in a while, a minister comes up and says we're illegal. Why illegal? Did we steal anything or commit any crime? We came here for protection, why did we leave our country? Our country is not poor, maybe richer than Australia. We came here because of what we suffered.

He goes on to express his perception of the media's coverage of asylum-seeker issues, and its responsibility in the ensuing public debate:

The media has a significant effect on the people . . . in radio stations and newspapers, they make us sound like we're killers, criminals, illegal, and disrespectful of others. By that, the Australian people are scared of us, because the word 'illegal' has a big effect on settled and safe societies. Australians don't know anything about asylum seekers, there's no one to tell them about us. They should go inside the detention centre and see the truth; I never saw a journalist in there, or a camera.



“We’re not migrants, we are asylum seekers.
There is a big difference between the two.”

Many interviewees spoke of the impossibility of obtaining valid travel documents as a political refugee fleeing an authoritarian regime. ‘Ali’ is one:

If someone lived in Iraq obeying Saddam’s rules, they’d be able to get a passport and apply to migrate legally. However, those who are prosecuted with death for a crime that they haven’t committed, how could they get a passport? An ordinary person, who was not involved in the Ba’ath party didn’t have the right to get a passport. Without that, then how can they apply for anything?

‘Habib’, an Afghan on a TPV, makes a similar point:

I believe what they are saying is very unfair and not justified. We are neither ‘illegals’ nor ‘queue jumpers’; we are people seeking refuge from life-threatening situations. Someone who risks his or her life does not do it for fun, but for pure necessity, in desperation. In Afghanistan under the Taliban the Tajik people’s lives as a whole, and my life in particular, were in danger. I was accused of being a Northern Alliance sympathiser. For such accusations, other innocent people were publicly executed, and I was lucky to have the opportunity to escape a certain death. I had no choice but to come to Australia by boat. We did not have the right to get passports from the Taliban government.

‘Ali’ went on to comment on what he perceives as a double standard on Iraqi refugees:

The media and the government say that we came to Australia illegally. This is not true and they know all the circumstances that made asylum seekers to come this way, not only to Australia, but all over the world . . . every time anything happens in Iraq, the American president makes a speech asking for the Iraqi people’s rights, same with the Australian prime minister. We are these Iraqi people, and we

ran away from our country. They know the reason why we ran away, how do they ask us to come the ‘legal’ way? . . . we didn’t come here for a holiday.

‘Abdallah’ finds the whole debate difficult to understand:

I don’t know what they mean by it. If I came legally and with a formal passport, how would I be an asylum seeker? What’s the point of seeking asylum if I could legally leave my country with my passport? I think that asylum seekers have to be illegal because they have to cross the border of their country illegally.

To make matters worse, ‘Salem’ points out that interpreters and translators have often mistakenly used the Arabic term for ‘illegitimate’ when attempting to explain the so-called ‘illegal’ status of asylum seekers in detention. In effect, refugees have been called ‘bastards’ in official situations, causing them great offence:

The Arabic translation of [the] word ‘illegal’ is not the word that they used . . . the word that they used meant ‘illegitimate’ not illegal, and this offends our religion and values. In the case of children . . . it means that they have no father, unknown parents, or that their parents aren’t legally married . . . this expression is very aggravating since it has a strong effect on our mental and social state, as well as our values.

QUEUE JUMPERS

The Australian government has argued that the host of legislative measures against onshore arrivals is designed to protect humanitarian resettlement places for ‘offshore’ refugees applying from other countries. Indeed, to support this policy, the present government has combined the previously separate categories into one humanitarian quota—thus en-

sure that onshore arrivals do in fact deny a resettlement place to an offshore refugee—a situation that did not apply under the previous government. Even so, Australia has not filled its resettlement quota of twelve thousand places in recent years, belying the rhetoric of ‘genuine’ refugees missing out. More critically, there are numerous logical problems with the idea of an orderly ‘queue’, owing to the nature of refugee determination processes in ‘receiving’ countries like Pakistan and Indonesia. Many receiving countries, including Indonesia, are not signatories to the United Nations Refugee Convention, and therefore it falls to chronically under-resourced UNHCR offices alone to make a determination of refugee claims. As such, these UNHCR offices end up with enormous numbers of claims. In Pakistan this situation means that the UNHCR office does not individually determine the refugee status of Afghan asylum seekers. Yet if an applicant wishes to come to Australia under the humanitarian component of our migration program, the Australian High Commissioner will insist that his or her claim cannot be considered until they are registered with the UNHCR.¹⁴

Equally, the resettlement capacity of transit countries is often limited. For example, even if the UNHCR Jakarta office finds a refugee-status claim to be successful, the refugee is unlikely to be found a resettlement country in the immediate future. From January 2000 to December 2001, the UNHCR in Jakarta found five hundred successful refugee claims but could only offer resettlement places for sixty-five of them. In the whole of 2001, Australia agreed to resettle only two refugees identified in Indonesia—one of whom was a child survivor of the SIEV X disaster and the other a child whose father was already in Australia.¹⁵ As Crock and Saul argue, “this statistic weakens somewhat Australia’s claim that it is committed to protecting refugees as long as they join the queue and follow proper procedures”.¹⁶

On the ‘queue’ issue, ‘Hamid’ provides the following testament:

I looked for that queue when I was in north Iraq and they told me that I couldn’t apply for asylum in my country. I also looked for it in Iran, Malaysia and Indonesia. I didn’t have a place to stay and believe me, if I could find a safe way to come, I

would have waited, but the truth is, there aren’t any queues.

The realities of accessing UN refugee determination processes are far from the picture of orderly, safe offshore queuing used to justify recent Australian deterrence measures. ‘Sami’ reflected on his experience of forced migration:

Where would we get the UN acceptance? In Jordan? It was too dangerous because it’s close to Iraq and the UN didn’t provide us with a formal document that would allow us to stay in the country where it’s situated. In Jordan, we could have been arrested at any time and sent back to Iraq. So we had to get as far as possible from the danger. This is what Australia called queue jumping.

‘Fatima’ was one of many asylum seekers rejected by overloaded UNHCR offices that had inadequate resources to review her case. She speaks of the difficulties facing refugees who are forced to rely on people smugglers in a foreign country:

We had a two-week visa for Malaysia and if they caught us after that, we’d be arrested. The two weeks passed and we didn’t get the Indonesian visa, so we had to pay three hundred American dollars to have another two-week extension to our visa. We got tired since we were told different things everyday. Some people recommended applying through the UN, which we did, and we were rejected.

Lack of adequate information for asylum seekers is also part of the problem. Peter Mares argues that “even if there were such a thing as a functional ‘queue’ for refugees to get to Australia, many people coming on boats would probably not know about it, or know how to join it”. Many asylum seekers are unaware of the existence of the UNHCR in countries through which they passed.¹⁷

Iraqi refugees who first fled to Iran find the idea of a ‘queue’ does not reflect the realities in many ‘transit’ countries. ‘Hasan’ is one:

I don’t know what they mean by queue. Do they mean the queue for applying for a visa in the Australian embassy? I don’t think they were allowing asylum seeking in Baghdad or Tehran. And even if they were allowing it, no-one could apply through

Interpreters and translators have often mistakenly used the Arabic term for ‘illegitimate’ when attempting to explain the so-called ‘illegal’ status of asylum seekers in detention. In effect, refugees have been called ‘bastards’ in official situations, causing them great offence.

the embassy because the government would know about it. Also, I haven’t heard that Australia was allowing asylum seeking in Iraq or Iran.

Others emphasise the difficulties of the short time frames for those fleeing persecution. This is the case for ‘Sharif’ who says:

Even if there was a queue, someone in my situation can’t wait, my life was in danger, I felt danger everywhere I went and I wasn’t safe with my family in order to wait.

Once again, others point to the distinctive use of these demeaning labels in Australia. These voices are reminders of the political choices made in this country, which have not been made in countries receiving far more asylum seekers. ‘Abdallah’ comments:

In other countries, such as Europe, people run away to another country and they’re given asylum and never hear of the expression queue jumper . . . The number of people that came to Australia and have the TPV isn’t that big . . . Honestly the expression ‘queue jumpers’ is meaningless and it comes from the immigration minister. Besides, if someone had to leave the country, he didn’t have the chance to wait and queue because he’d be killed. Queuing can mean death.

‘ECONOMIC MIGRANTS’

As Mares notes, Australian media coverage seems to be fixated upon ideas of Australia’s ‘pull’ factors—suggesting a phenomenon of economic migration, rather than the ‘push’ factors that force refugees to leave their homes in the first place.¹⁸ The federal government has reinforced these misconceptions with official statements about refugees “seeking migration outcomes”.¹⁹ Sharon Pickering, in her survey of the treatment of refugee and asy-

lum-seeker issues in the Australian media, draws a similar conclusion to Mares:

With few exceptions, reports on asylum seekers and refugees have not been interested in listening to the voices of asylum seekers, nor of home country conditions or conditions of flight. When alternative views are offered, they are usually presented as ‘human interest’ stories rather than ‘hard’ news.²⁰

‘Salem’, an Iraqi TPV holder, finds the use of the term ‘migrants’ a strange one in the context of his personal experience as a refugee:

We’re not migrants, we are asylum seekers. There is a big difference between the two. Distorting the truth about boat people, and hiding the real reasons we sought asylum in Australia, the Australian government launched a huge media campaign for political reasons, calling us ‘immigrants’ when we are not immigrants, but asylum seekers.

While there will always be a minority of cases in which an asylum claim has been made fraudulently, the processes of refugee-status determination in Australia are rigorous and lengthy. Moreover, as many refugees point out, the very idea of someone risking their lives in unseaworthy boats when they are not in danger is difficult to sustain. The phenomenon of onshore asylum seekers arriving by boat can only be truly understood as one of forced migration. Indeed, the high success rates of asylum claims made by onshore asylum seekers in Australia testify to an official acknowledgement of this fact. ‘Ahmed’ puts it succinctly:

These are strange words. If I didn’t have to come this way, I wouldn’t have risked my life and crossed the sea. I had no other choice. It was a big risk and a life threat. Do you think I’d risk my life for no reason? Crossing the sea in a small boat for no reason?

The distinction between asylum seekers and ‘migrants’ is cogently articulated by ‘Mohammed’:

We’re asylum seekers, not migrants so they can’t call us queue jumpers . . . a migrant is someone who comes to work and change the circumstances of his life. However, an asylum seeker is in danger and he goes to another country to find peace. This person fears death and wants to run away from it, could he wait and stand in the queue in the Australian embassy? This is impossible . . . because if someone is worried about their life, how could he wait for his turn . . . we’re asylum seekers, not migrants. They should go back to the UN and see the definitions of an asylum seeker and migrant. A migrant comes to work, or study, a migrant hands in his degree . . . that’s not the case for us, we had to leave our country, we didn’t have a choice.

Although aware of the unorthodox route taken to reach Australia, ‘Omar’ nevertheless rejects the notion that the mode of seeking asylum somehow renders one less deserving:

I escaped the Taliban regime and worked my way down to the seaport where I paid my fare to shipping smugglers to embark to Australia in ‘rust-buckets’. I am thoroughly distressed at being labelled a ‘queue jumper’ or ‘illegal immigrant’, as I was a genuine asylum seeker. It was an assumption there were queue jumpers; it was quite false. It was not possible for me to migrate to Australia as I had no family members residing in Australia, other than as an asylum seeker.

While much of recent Australian refugee policy and rhetoric about desired ‘migration outcomes’ has suggested that refugees come here for ‘lifestyle reasons’, interviews with refugees suggest a different picture. Many refugees stress the desire simply to get to a country of relative peace and security, and the relative expense of Europe or North America over Australia. For ‘Sami’, Australia was chosen simply because it was the only affordable option:

If we could have gone to Europe, we would have, but we couldn’t afford it. The asylum programs there are ten times better than in Australia. Over there, you can get a passport after seven months which allows you to travel freely. They also don’t arrest

asylum seekers. We didn’t target Australia. We felt like we were in prison in Australia. Financial problems, as well as all the security issues prevented us seeking asylum in Europe. We couldn’t afford to go.

EXPERIENCES OF AUSTRALIAN PEOPLE

Many interviewees spoke of the warm welcome they received from ordinary Australians. In detention centres, many had been led to believe that they would face a hostile reception in the community. As ‘Aisha’ comments, this was far from the case. They clearly identify the government as the agent of their stigmatisation:

At first, I thought that asylum seekers were not welcome by the Australian people. Now, after a year of interacting with them, I feel that Australians welcome us, help us, and want to show their support to the federal government. This government is very cruel and doesn’t want us in Australia.

The contradictory public messages and mixed feelings expressed towards asylum seekers are perplexing for the refugees themselves, as ‘Leila’ notes:

In the camp, they always used to say that the Australians don’t want us and don’t want to deal with us or interact with us. We felt that it was the opposite. We saw people doing protests for us. I also saw people on TV standing in front of the camp crying for us. They were so hurt for us; they even broke the cables and released people. Why do government people call us criminals and make us look like criminals? We feel that the people are with us, only the government is against us. We love the Australians and we feel that we get along with them. We have Australian friends, and we feel that they want us to live here all together.

‘Leila’ went on to make a special plea to the Australian government:

We ask the Australian government not to make us look bad in front of the Australian people. We love Australia and we now feel that we are in our country. We feel comfortable despite everything, more than in our own country. We ask the government to stop saying things about us, such as throwing our children off boats; this is not true. I always try

“I looked for that queue when I was in north Iraq. I also looked for it in Iran, Malaysia and Indonesia. I didn’t have a place to stay and believe me, if I could find a safe way to come, I would have waited, but the truth is, there aren’t any queues.”

to provide my children with love, attention, safety and settling down until their father is permitted to come from Iran to Australia. I’m trying my best to provide comfort to them and I just hope that they’ll get everything they need.

MEDIA

Responses to the media are mixed among TPV holders. Many are appreciative of the perceived role television played in highlighting the conditions they endured when in detention. ‘Saha’ is one:

[We felt] the media was on our side in the camp. They used to talk about us on the news and we used to see it on Channel 7. They used to explain our situation, so we felt that they were on our side. However, we felt that the government was against us. They gave us a temporary visa for three years. The government now has stopped boats from getting into Australia; we were on the last one. Why don’t they give us the permanent visa? How many are we?

Others have a less flattering view of the Australian media. ‘Rania’ is a survivor of the SIEV X tragedy, in which 353 asylum seekers drowned en route to Australia:

In regards to the media, they just wanted to get the news: how did the accident happen? And about how we saw the other ships and they didn’t help us . . . They didn’t ask us whether we were comfortable, or happy with the Australian government. Until now, nobody has talked to us about these issues. Only one organisation helped us and this was the Victorian Arabic Social Services, it’s the only place where I felt that they were on our side and defended us.

Australia’s political leadership has actively promoted these discourses of exclusion and divisiveness that

now permeate the mainstream media. Indeed, Prime Minister Howard’s electoral platform in 1996 spoke of the need to ‘liberate’ Australia from a form of political correctness putatively associated with left-wing academics and commentators.²¹ Perversely, political correctness has been replaced by a systematic discourse of exclusion in which negative representations of ‘others’—particularly Arabs, Muslims and Indigenous people—have come to be regarded as symbols of a ‘liberated’ society, not a racially paranoid one.²²

CONCLUSION

As Pickering argues, media stereotypes portraying asylum seekers as a threat to the nation seek to validate a host of increasingly repressive state responses.²³ Recently, the systematic attempt to depict unauthorised arrivals as undeserving has been paralleled by new Temporary Protection Visa regulations in Australia. Under the TPV policy, some of the most vulnerable people in the Australian community live with the ongoing fear of being refused a visa extension after three years, and are deemed ineligible for English classes, housing assistance and a range of settlement assistance measures available to refugees on permanent protection visas. Of particular concern, TPVs have no right to family reunion programs and no right of return if they leave the country. As such, many TPVs are permanently isolated from their spouses and children. This policy of open discrimination against TPV holders has resulted in considerable levels of anguish and hardship for already traumatised asylum seekers, and placed severe strain on community-sector agencies and services.²⁴ As at 1 August 2002, official DIMIA figures put the number of TPVs in the Australian community at 7957.²⁵ Australia, and more recently Denmark, remain the only countries in the world to provide ‘temporary’ sanctuary, in its punitive form, to those who have been recognised as conventional refugees.²⁶

These same people have been stigmatised by

what Mungo MacCallum calls Ruddock's "verbal master stroke" of the "unlawful" tag.²⁷ This view of "illegal intruders" committing premeditated acts of self-harm²⁸ or harm to their own children has been reinforced by politicians, with little serious media scrutiny or debate. The deliberate manipulation of language to exclude asylum seekers from any category of people with whom one might feel human solidarity demonstrates the power of language to demonise and dehumanise the most vulnerable of human beings: those in desperate need of protection and care.

1. As the former Human Rights Commissioner Chris Sidoti noted, "no other western country permits incommunicado detention of asylum-seekers". See Chris Sidoti, *For those who come across the seas: The detention of unauthorised arrivals in Australia*, HREOC, Canberra, 1998, p.224.
2. A point made by Mueen Al-Breih, 'A Personal Experience of the TPV Policy', in M. Leach and F. Mansouri (eds), *Critical Perspectives on Refugee Policy in Australia*, Deakin University, Geelong, 2003, pp.165-74.
3. See for example Sharon Pickering, 'Common Sense and Original Deviancy: News Discourses and Asylum Seekers in Australia', *Journal of Refugee Studies* 14:2, 2001, pp.169-186.
4. For example, Australia has accepted only two UNHCR-processed asylum seekers directly from Indonesia in recent years.
5. See Michael Leach, 'Disturbing Practices: Dehumanising Asylum Seekers in the Refugee "Crisis" in Australia 2001-2', *Refugee* 21:3, 2003, pp.25-33.
6. Matt Price, 'Strangling claims unsupported', *Australian*, 6 April 2002.
7. See for example 'Woomera hunger strike continues as talks fail', *ABC Online News*, 25 January 2002, <www.abc.net.au/news/2002/01/item20020125080108_1.htm>.
8. See 'Media Statement by President Professor Alice Tay AM and Dr Sev Ozdowski, Human Rights Commissioner', *Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission*, 6 February 2002, <www.hreoc.gov.au/media_releases/2002/05_02.html>.
9. Leach, 'Disturbing Practices', p.29.
10. "Might we take this opportunity to assure you that no adult person in this Centre sewed the lips of any child. We hope you will have the opportunity to set right the record on this matter which has offended our dignity very greatly." Afghan Delegates' Letter to Prime Minister, 20 February 2002.
11. Andrew West, 'This isn't a camp, its [sic] an oven and we are burning', *Sun-Herald*, 17 February 2002. The United Nations Association of Australia argued that the government should apologise to asylum seekers wrongly accused of child neglect. See United Nations Association of Australia, *Unity* 288, 22 February 2002, <www.unaa.org.au/news288>.
12. Peter Mares, 'What next for Australia's refugee policy?', in Leach and Mansouri (eds.), *Critical Perspectives*, 2003, pp.1-21, at 2.
13. *Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees*, 1951, s.31.
14. Peter Mares, *Borderline: Australia's Treatment of Refugees and Asylum Seekers* (second edition), UNSW Press, Sydney, 2002, pp.21-23.
15. Mares, 2002, pp.208, 243-4.
16. Mary Crock and Ben Saul, *Future Seekers: Refugees and the Law in Australia*, Federation Press, Sydney, 2002, p.35.
17. Mares, 2002, pp.208, 221-3.
18. Mares, 2002, pp.30-31.
19. See for example Philip Ruddock, transcript of 6PR interview with John McNamara, <www.liberal.org.au/MEDIA/campaign/RUDDOCK/ruddocktrmcnamara23oct.htm>, 23 October 2001.
20. Sharon Pickering, 'The Hard Press of Asylum', *Forced Migration Review* 8, 2000, p.33.
21. Michael Clyne, 'When the discourse of hatred becomes respectable: does the linguist have a responsibility?', *Australian Review of Applied Linguistics* 26:1, 2003, pp.1-5.
22. Ghassan Hage, *Against Paranoid Nationalism*, Pluto Press, Australia, 2002.
23. Pickering, 'The Hard Press', p.173.
24. See Fethi Mansouri and Melek Bagdas, *Politics of Social Exclusion: Refugees on Temporary Protection Visas*, Deakin University, Geelong, 2002, pp.6-7.
25. DIMIA Fact Sheet 74a, 'Boat Arrival Details', <www.immi.gov.au/facts/74a_boatarrivals.htm>, 1 August 2002.
26. Fethi Mansouri and Michael Leach, 'Temporary Protection of Refugees: Australian Policy and International Comparisons', in Leach and Mansouri, *Critical Perspectives*, pp.103-122.
27. M. MacCallum, 'Girt by sea', *Quarterly Essay* 5, Black Inc., Melbourne, 2002.
28. Clyne, 'When the Discourse', p.4.

The authors would like to thank the Myer Foundation for its generous support of this research, and Anna Trembath for research assistance. Any opinions expressed are those of the authors alone. Given the vulnerable nature of people on the Temporary Protection Visa, pseudonyms have been used for all interviewees.

Michael Leach is a Research Fellow at the Institute for Citizenship and Globalisation at Deakin University.

Fethi Mansouri is a Senior Lecturer in Middle Eastern Studies at Deakin University.