

49th

by total number

62nd

by population size

87th

by wealth

How Australia compares:

World's most generous countries for accepting refugees

Source: Asylum Seeker Resource Centre <http://www.asrc.org.au/resources/statistics/>

DETENTION STATISTICS

892

Children in detention

5500

Total in detention

350 days

Average length in detention (and increasing)

Image: Child in detention on Nauru

BUSTING THE MYTHS ON REFUGEES

People who come by boat are queue jumpers

Actually, there is no queue. In most countries that refugees come from, like Afghanistan, there is no way to apply for refugee status. The waiting time in the world's refugee camps is so slow that at current rates it would take over 180 years to resettle everyone. Most are never resettled. The "official" refugee resettlement process is a ticket in a lottery, not a place in a queue.



Isn't arriving by boat illegal?



It's perfectly legal under Australian and International law to arrive here by boat and claim asylum. This is because refugee law has always recognised that when people's lives are at risk, they cannot wait to apply through whatever "proper procedures" there are. When Scott Morrison labels asylum seekers "illegals" he

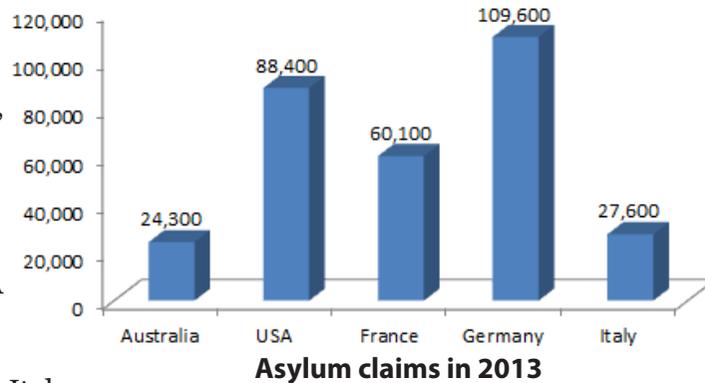
is deliberately trying to demonise people to distract voters from Australia's real problems.

Stopping the boats saves lives at sea

If the Government really cared about the lives of asylum seekers, they would process asylum seeker claims in Indonesia and fly to Australia those found to be refugees. But in the last ten years the highest number resettled from Indonesia in one year has been 600—of over 10,000 currently stranded there. These people have nowhere else to go.

If we don't stop the boats, we will face a flood of refugees

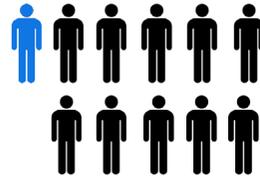
The highest ever number of asylum seekers to arrive by boat in one year, 2013, was 21,000. That was just 9% of our overall annual immigration intake that year. In the same year the USA took 88,400 claims, France took 60,100, Germany 109,600 and Italy 27,800. The Abbott government has now slashed our intake to 16,500. Australia could clearly do much more to help people who need our protection.



Source: UNHCR Asylum trends 2013 report

Asylum seeker boat arrivals are not real refugees

Actually, government figures based on the assessment of people's refugee claims show that about 90% of boat arrivals are found to be refugees with a genuine fear of persecution. Only the most desperate people are prepared to risk danger and death to travel here by boat.



Asylum seekers in 2013 (blue) versus overall immigration

Don't they use people smugglers?

Refugees have no choice but to use "people smugglers". Many people smugglers have been considered heroes, like Oskar Schindler, who saved more than 1000 Jews during the Holocaust. But whatever the people smugglers' motives, they are often the only way to escape repressive regimes and find safety.

Why don't they have travel documents? I heard some even destroy their documents

These people come from war zones or places where they are persecuted by their government. It is impossible for many to get travel documents, and may be dangerous to carry them anyway. Others may have to obtain false documents to get out of a dangerous country, or simply may not have had time to pack when they heard that their lives were in danger.



Asylum seekers in Cisarua, Indonesia

They are safe in Indonesia. They should stay there

Asylum seekers in Indonesia have no healthcare, cannot work, cannot send their kids to school, and live in overcrowded accommodation, sometimes two or three families in a two room flat. They are often harassed by police or thrown in detention. To be safe, asylum seekers need to get to a country that has signed the Refugee Convention and will grant them permanent residency. Australia has, so we should live up to our promise and care for these people.

We should look after Australians who are homeless and poor first

Australia is one of the wealthiest nations in the world. If we can't look after Australians, it's because of Government policies that favour the richest people while taking from the most vulnerable in our society. It has nothing to do with the costs of accommodating a few refugees. We need to demand fairer policies while standing up for vulnerable people everywhere. This includes refugees.

Prepared by Refugee Action Coalition

More detailed fact sheets available at refugeeaction.org.au/?page_id=51

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