

REFUGEE FACTS

FACT 1

AN ASYLUM SEEKER IS SOMEONE SEEKING PROTECTION WHOSE CLAIM FOR REFUGEE STATUS HAS NOT YET BEEN ASSESSED.

RECEIVED

Asylum seekers may arrive in Australia by boat or plane and ask for protection. The government should process their claims promptly and fairly and if they are found to be refugees they should be granted a visa.

FACT 2

A REFUGEE IS SOMEONE WHO HAS BEEN FORCED TO FLEE THEIR COUNTRY BECAUSE OF PERSECUTION, WAR OR VIOLENCE.



Until 2012, when processing ceased, 90 per cent of asylum seekers who arrived by boat were assessed to be refugees fleeing persecution.

FACT 3

IT IS NOT ILLEGAL TO SEEK ASYLUM IN AUSTRALIA, EVEN IF ARRIVING BY BOAT.



The right to seek asylum is recognised under Australian (1958 Migration Act) and international law.

FACT 4

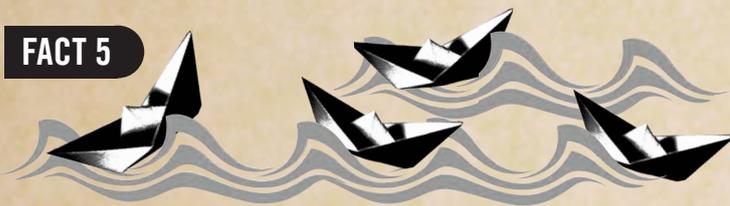
THERE IS NO QUEUE.



As of the end of 2013, there are 51.2 million people displaced by conflict and persecution worldwide. 16.7 million of them are registered refugees but only 80,000 resettlement places are available every year.

FACT 5

GLOBALLY, 348,000 PEOPLE ATTEMPTED DANGEROUS, CROSS-BORDER BOAT JOURNEYS IN 2014. A SIGNIFICANT NUMBER OF THESE PEOPLE WERE REFUGEES FLEEING PERSECUTION.



FACT 6

IN 2012-13, MOST ASYLUM SEEKERS COMING TO AUSTRALIA BY BOAT CAME FROM AFGHANISTAN, IRAN, PAKISTAN, SRI LANKA AND IRAQ.



These are all countries experiencing conflicts or high levels of human rights abuses.

FACT 7

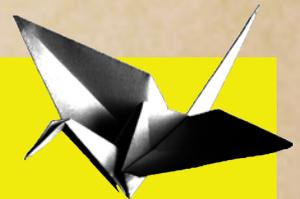
REFUGEES 2013
(UNHCR global trends 2013)



AUSTRALIA RECEIVES A VERY SMALL NUMBER OF REFUGEES BY INTERNATIONAL STANDARDS.

FACT 8

NEARLY ALL ASYLUM SEEKERS ARE PEACEFUL MEMBERS OF OUR SOCIETY.



In 2011-12, asylum seekers living in the community on bridging visas were about 45 times less likely to be charged with a crime than members of the general public.

REFUGEE MYTHS

MYTH: Asylum seekers who arrive by boat are illegal	It is legal to seek asylum in Australia, even if you arrive on a boat without a visa. Seeking asylum is a legal right guaranteed under Australian and international law. It is illegal for governments to punish asylum seekers for arriving by boat.
MYTH: Offshore processing deters people getting on boats	People who get on boats often know the risks but feel they have no choice because of the terrible danger they face where they are. If we really want to 'stop the boats', we would make refugees' lives safer in countries like Malaysia and Indonesia, instead of further punishing people who arrive on our shores fleeing terror and violence.
MYTH: Asylum seekers are just after a better job	Nearly all asylum seekers are found to be refugees fleeing persecution, war and violence.
MYTH: If all they want is protection, they could stay in Indonesia/Malaysia	Most asylum seekers do stay in a neighbouring country or other countries in our region like Pakistan, Indonesia and Malaysia. These countries are either struggling to cope with the influx of refugees or do not offer protection to refugees under law.
MYTH: Asylum seekers come here because the government has taken a soft approach	Australia's treatment of asylum seekers remains very tough by international standards. Nearly all the boat arrivals in recent years have been people from Sri Lanka, Afghanistan, Iraq and Iran – countries where human rights abuses are widespread. Asylum seeker arrival numbers follow regional and global trends - no policy of deterrence is going to change the fact that people are fleeing for their lives.
MYTH: If asylum seekers can afford to get here, they don't need protection	On average, it costs \$5,000–20,000 to seek asylum in Australia. Many asylum seekers are not wealthy, but borrow money from relatives and/or sell land and possessions to make the journey to safety. Refugee status is not based on income but on whether or not a person has faced persecution.
MYTH: Supporting asylum seekers means supporting people smuggling	People smugglers may be breaking the law, but asylum seekers are not. It is inhumane and against the law to punish asylum seekers escaping war and terror in order to send a message to people smugglers. To stop people smuggling, we need to make sure that refugees can seek protection without resorting to using people smugglers.
MYTH: Charity begins at home, let's help our poor and homeless first.	The government does not have to choose between supporting Australians and protecting refugees. Australia spends billions on detention and offshore processing. This could happen in the community, for a fraction of the cost.
MYTH: Asylum seekers should get help from the UN in their country	It is often very difficult, and even impossible, for asylum seekers to get help from the UN. Often they don't even know the UN exists, or it is too dangerous to go to the city where the UN office is. Even if they are able to contact the UN and get UN refugee status, there is often very little the UN can do to help them find safety.
MYTH: Asylum seekers destroy their identity documents to get refugee status	When escaping oppressive governments or sudden violence, it is often impossible to bring a passport, or these documents are lost or stolen during the long journey to safety. But governments can and should assess asylum claims and protect refugees, even without identity documents.
MYTH: Boat people are potential terrorists and pose a security risk to Australia.	No asylum seekers who have arrived by boat have been found to be terrorists. All asylum seekers arriving in Australia by boat must pass security checks before being granted protection. If a person is found to have committed a serious crime they are not given refugee status.

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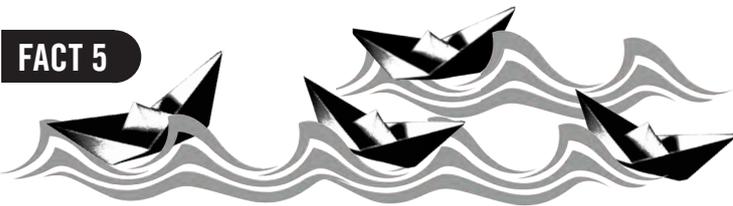
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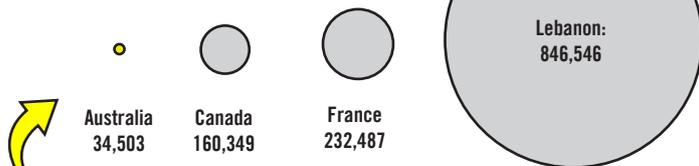
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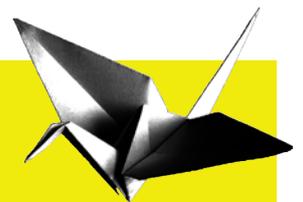
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