

Dear Sir

I am writing as a very concerned Australian, who is utterly ashamed of the disgraceful attitude and behaviour of both sides of governments have taken regarding the placement of refugees in our country.

Very few, in world terms, reach our shore; those who do show remarkable resilience and resourcefulness. They should never be locked up in remote places, where other Australians can never see them, hear them, or understand what they have gone through, and are continuing to experience. I think it is a deliberate, diabolical solution to remove them as far as possible from most of society, so that we can't know who they are, their experiences and traumas.

I see that future generations will judge us as harshly as some have judged Nazi Germany, in which people were dehumanized in the same way as refugees are in the present Australia.

I visited refugees in Villawood for 1 1/2 years and heard their stories; most would have been ideal Australian citizens with excellent skills and a variety of languages, ready and willing to be part of our society.

I feel particularly for the plight of unaccompanied minors; where children are not accompanied also goes great trauma, whether parents are dead, or child has been sent so that they may escape war or other violence in the home society.

We know that there are many organisations and private people who will help them, look after them, provide for them, so that they will not be a burden on our social services. This is a better solution for all concerned.

I would like to know more exactly what our government is doing to negotiate with governments in order to help countries democratise, help provide alleviation from poverty, provide education, so that people do not want to leave their home country. Most people do not want to leave their home country, however bad conditions are, they would always choose to stay, and if they know that conditions are improving, people would not leave. Everyone wants democratic institutions of health and education, roads, plumbing, and a job which allows everyone to live a life style concomitant with their society; this does not mean a western life style. We know the main reasons people leave their country of origin is because conditions are so dreadful: politically and socially.

If there is information I can read about what our government is doing to alleviate exploitative trade policies and alleviate social conditions in traditional/simple societies (the majority world), then I would be delighted.

I do not envy our officials these times; we need our wisdom, understanding and empathy in order to properly engage with the world, with change for all

Regards

Catherine Dignam