

Portland OR
Sept 8, 2001

The Right Honourable John Howard
Prime Minister of Australia
3-5 National Circuit
Barton ACT 2600

Dear Prime Minister,

Your two recent actions with regard to the boat people from Indonesia are indecent, inhumane and illegal.

Your intent to remove Ashmore reef and Christmas Island from Australia's migration zone, *and have that legislation be retrospective and take effect from 2 pm Sept 8, 2001*, indicates that you are well aware of the dubious legality of the action HMAS Warramunga took.

You are a beneficiary of the effects immigration has had on (white) Australia. You know perfectly well what refugees have done for Australia. I daresay your own family was immigrant once. What do you intend to say to the children and grandchildren of the Jews who arrived in the 1930s? That their settlement was a function of wider days, happier times, lax legislation and lighter skin?

Australia is signatory to the 1951 Refugee Convention.

Your most recent and outrageous actions radically redefine what it is to be Australian - aggressively racist, militarized, isolationist.

Your most recent and outrageous actions make me ashamed of being Australian.

Nothing can redeem either your standing, or ours, or mine, but your resolution *not* to excise Christmas Island and Ashmore Reef from Australia's migration zone, to accept refugees, treat them humanely, and honour the 1951 Refugee Convention.

Yours faithfully

Maira McAuliffe