



AUSTRALIAN CATHOLIC BISHOPS CONFERENCE

Australian Catholic Migrant and Refugee Office



Australian Catholic
Migrant &
Refugee Office

Migrant Chaplains Conference **Addresses by K. Andrews MP and T. Burke MP** **Held on 30 October, 2007, 1.30pm**

Introduction to Kevin Andrews

Kevin Andrews noted the importance of the conference, stating that according to the last census, 27% of Australians described themselves as Catholic.

- 1) Context of Immigration programme in Australia
It is a great achievement of balance between two issues - diversity and integration of migrants into a socially cohesive society
 - diversity of immigrants, Australian tapestry of today
- 2) Humanitarian programmes = 13 000 – same as previous financial year. Per capita basis is largest.
 - Australia takes more people under this programme than all of Europe combined.
 - 3-4 million people who have fled Iraq – many are Christians. One of the considerations taken into account.
 - Communities, such as Mardeans, Chaldeans – result was increase to 35% from Middle East. 35% from Asia – tension in Burma. 30% from Africa (approx. 1000 per year).
- 3) Settlement services – increase in budget to 250 million in total spent on these services. (Findings at Internal Government committee)
- 4) Labour Agreement – Andrews is pleased that through the good offices of Father Murphy the agreement has been signed by the Government and the Catholic Church. To help with work in the church. Several concessions were made – English, age, qualifications. Pray that it works for the benefit of the church.
- 5) 4 000 interventions per year. Try to address using case by case basis. Takes into account recommendations made by the community. It is an exercise in justice and as in Augustus, justice is compassion.
- 6) Future of Immigration
Several demographic shifts;
 - i. Demographic shift – last was baby boom, 40-60's, retirement over next 10-15 years.
 - ii. Less children born into Australian families for last 30 years or so.

Combine with aging population. Need to find more people due to the number of people exiting the work force. Immigration is very important to Australia's future.



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Integration – what level they are – skilled migrants, family reunions. 102 000 this year – skilled migrant stream.

Work has played an important role in the settlement of people. It is part of the process of integration. Your role in that is valuable and he commends us on it.

Des;

- a) Schooling of Immigrant children. 1st and 2nd generation children – to see what is happening, how they are going.
- b) Living in harmony – interfaith. Formation of Interfaith/religious council.

Minister will take that advocacy on board.

John from Sudan – came about 9 years.

Sudanese situation is worse than any other in the world. We who have settled here have taken the comments made by Kevin Andrews (regarding the Sudanese community not integrating well) very seriously [about two months ago Kevin Andrews made comments on Sudanese finding it difficult to integrate to the community – these comments were made when a report on integration of migrants was released) – family reunion. Bodies are here, but not psychologically. Have been experiencing this for 5 decades.

Andrews; Government has to make a decision in the end. Whenever he visits migrant groups, they ask no more from their location. In the end, we can't take every one. Have to make a balanced view. Officially, there are 9-10 million around the world.

When I first became minister – Intergovernmental Report on settlement – findings of the report – not to say that it was a racist action.

Community groups/organisations to sponsor/adequately provide support, a network for people settling here – rather than an individual sponsor.

Sudanese – *Tresa* – in her experience.

People are getting jobs, going to school/uni. So what is it specifically?

Andrews: Report looks at various things – time spent in refugee camps, longer, also difficulties of young men 15-16, 18. Long periods of no education – dropping out of school. There are many people who are integrating well, but evidence showed some problems. Allocate more money for resettlement to deal with problems. Most people to reach their aspirations.

Bishop Grech – good to hear - officially recognise the importance of migrants and the role of the Church in integration – Practical steps to help integration.

Tony Burke

Development of Labour Agreement – full support.



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World Youth Day – extraordinary event

More people arriving than for Olympics. Is Federal Labor Party's representative for WYD Committee.

People who arrive without visas.

.....good valid response from both sides of politics – 146, 142, 65 – Number of children, women, men who drowned – regard it as compassionate policy to stop those boats.

Nauru- doesn't believe it should continue. There is a serious mental health price.

Temporary Protection Visas

Agreed to by both side of politics.

Number of boat arrivals went up not down. Long periods of uncertainty his preference is to make decision early.

No valid claim – returned home.

Valid – start their life in Oz.

Off shore Humanitarian Programme - will be the best and worst part of the job. For one person that you want to help, it means that you can't help another.

In Burma – waiting 17 years for a solution. Have to try to maximise people who are able to join existing family units.

Integration – Tony Burke says go hand in hand. Integration is like a salad, creating a National flavour.

Seperatist model – no one wants.

Leadership of Australian African Community.

Young people at schools – incorrect placing

Do work with states regarding schooling for migrant children, ESL programmes not tailored to Africa but for Eastern European migrants.

States – high priority on training for elder people.

Adult English language – make more vocational traineeships, learn more about what's expected in Australia – practical aspects and incorporate adult language. Adults learn by doing – link it with being paid at the end of the week.

The people who exit English programmes – 9/10 leave without reaching full functional English

Citizenship

No portfolio that characterises how Australia is and how it's seen by the world. Building a cohesive nation. Certainly believe it could be built better than it has been.



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Words can be bullets – do not believe in building a salad – cohesion.
Everything that can be built that is cohesive should be done.

Reinaldo – Latin American community. Columbian waiting for 5 years. Officially not yet accepted and cannot work.

On Bridging Visa E.

T.Burke: What we propose – was discussed at National conference in May - issue new guidelines for asylum seekers only – give the right to work. But if it is a frivolous claim to work, this type of visa will not be issued.

Des: Thanks for vocational focus. Unaccompanied minor. 1/200 Vietnamese born men in Australia are in prison. Too many broken families. Des does not have a sense of interfaith relation view of Kevin - what is .

Laurie Ferguson has the portfolio for Multicultural Affairs. Don't think the integration focus is different to Kevin's. It's important we work on Interfaith relations and we have integration

Father Paul Fyfe

Integration has been politicised in past 20 years or so.

2001 – Multicultural part broken down.

Humanitarian program – one part where government picks the country.

Won't engage in bad policy in order to reach bipartisan – much better country if we can leave politics aside.

Pittacello – Detention camps – appalled Christians Only thing can think of – they were cheated by people traffickers. Don't approve that once they are in Australia, they are put in such desolate places. Will then be phased out.

T.B. believe it is appropriate to have detention centres to do ID, health and security checks. These can be done in a few weeks. Children should not be inside.

Both sides of politics admitted the error of having children in detention, children are no longer kept in detention centres.

Christmas Island Detention centre: it is appropriate to have a detention centre there but then process applicants quickly and find a durable solution. That's where the boats arrive.

Brenda: will you increase the Humanitarian program due to savings made from closing Nauru?

T.Burke: terrible accounting practice -

Money spent on Nauru is counted as foreign aid.



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Have to make some improvements in resettlement kick in before increasing Humanitarian program

Regarding Andrews statement that Australia's Humanitarian program is among the best in the world, ignores the numbers of European refugees who just show up in the country where they are seeking asylum.

Father Pettena: One of the main issues when we speak of migrants. As a politician, Catholic man – how do you envision your Christian/Catholic values influencing you perhaps being a Minister?

T. Burke: Can't enter portfolio without understanding the flight into Egypt. When persecuted people reach Australia, their persecution must end. Getting people out of detention early, is how you want Australia to reach people. In Australia there are two stories – i. the Indigenous story, ii. Story and journey of getting here.

Citizenship Ceremony

We are as Australian as each other. Part of their journey, their ID, their journey of getting here. Get away from false concept of being migrant or Aussie.

