



6 May 2009

The Hon. Kevin Rudd MP
Prime Minister of Australia
Parliament House
CANBERRA ACT 2600

Dear Mr Rudd

The Plight of Asylum Seekers

We are the Anglican and Catholic Bishops of Newcastle. We write to affirm the humanitarian practice of your Government's policy towards asylum seekers and our support for this policy.

We recognize that your government has faced in recent days constant criticism from the Federal Opposition as well as close (and at times raucous) media scrutiny. We know something of pressure, even of the lobbying kind. We plead with you not to resile from your humanitarian approach towards asylum seekers no matter their means of arrival in Australia.

We affirm the principled treatment of asylum seekers within the Judaeo-Christian sacred texts (the commandments detailing treatment of the alien within Israel's borders) and believe that current government policy reflects that degree of value and dignity that is fundamental to the practices of a civilized society such as Australia.

We deplore any attempt to demonize asylum seekers and note thankfully your resilient resistance to the politicization of the recent tragic episode with the boat people in the waters of Northern Australia.

We want to affirm that your principled policy and behaviour is applauded and very thankfully endorsed.

Grace and peace,

Dr Brian Farran
Bishop of Newcastle

The Most Reverend Michael Malone
Bishop of Maitland-Newcastle

c.c. The Minister for Immigration and Citizenship
The Federal Leader of the Opposition
The Federal Member for Newcastle
The Social Justice Committee of the Diocese of Newcastle
The Social Justice Council, Diocese of Maitland-Newcastle
The Editor, [The Newcastle Herald](#)