
IMMIGRATION AND REFUGEES

Edmund Barton on the Immigration Restriction Act

Source: [Parliament of Australia](#)

We do not want our social conditions disturbed by different standards of living that are bound to create, beyond racial differences, other differences to the extent of hatred between class and class in our community. That is one of the chief things we wish to avoid. The best way in which to do that is to prohibit virtually the influx of that class of alien labour which, if not prohibited, would lead to such results. I think it is better for us to try and keep before our eyes the real object of the Bill. I take it that the real object of the Bill, or of any such legislation, is that which I have described. It has been said that this education test will fail to keep out persons of high education coming from other countries, such as Japan or China. In the first place, however, we do not find these people

coming here, as a rule. It is seldom that they come unless on a mission or with a wish to open up trade with us. As long as they seek to open up trade with us on lines that we lay down by our Tariff or in other ways, we do not and cannot resent it.

Chris Watson on the Immigration Restriction Act

Source: [Parliament of Australia](#)

...although the Government have not seen fit to take the straight method - the straight method in our opinion, anyhow - those of us who desire to see coloured people kept out must leave a weapon in the hands of the Government of the day that will allow them to bar any person who may have qualified in one particular language, but who, nevertheless, is a most undesirable immigrant. If we make the alteration suggested by the honorable and learned member for Parkes, it will be quite possible that the millions of coloured people about whom he spoke the other evening as being well educated and, therefore, able to pass a test in some Eu-

ropean language, may gain admission ; and while he may look with equanimity on such a possibility, I for one cannot do so.

George Reid on the Immigration Restriction Act

Source: [Parliament of Australia](#)

I should like to point out - with all respect to the committee - that this is a matter affecting the credit and character of this Federal Parliament. Can it possibly be contemplated that we intend calmly to put in this Bill words which would permit of a Frenchman being set a task in Turkish, or a German being called upon to write out a passage in the Spanish language, and so on right through the category? I do not say that that would be done by the present administration, or by any administration, or by any Customs officer apart from any administration, because I do not suppose that any Customs officer would really do that sort of thing without some direction from a superior authority.

Sir Malcolm McEacharn on the Immigration Restriction Act

Source: [Parliament of Australia](#)

I am at one with the whole of the members of this House in desiring that the Japanese should not come here in large numbers, and I agree thoroughly with the desire that we should have a white Australia, although I think, with the honorable and learned member for Parkes, that a very great deal more has been made out of the danger to the Commonwealth through alien immigration than is warranted by the circumstances. I feel that our present laws are quite sufficient to prevent our being seriously contaminated by an influx of aliens, and yet if the proposal to pass fresh legislation had been brought forward as a protection to labour, I would have been one of the first to support it. I recognise that if Japanese can come here in any large number, they will compete at low rates with white labour, and I will be no party to that.

Sir John Forrest on the Immigration Restriction Act

Source: [Parliament of Australia](#)

We desire that this country shall not be overrun with races whose sympathies, and manners, and customs, and religion are not as ours. There is another reason, and perhaps this is a very strong reason, that these peoples we wish to restrict are so close to us. There are millions of them, and if we do not place some restrictions on them, they will overrun the country, and, instead of being a British country, this will be an Asiatic country. We do not want that. I am sure of this, and I have some reason to speak with confidence, that the British Government and the British people do not wish that to occur. They are in sympathy with us, and all they want is to find some means of placing the restriction so that it will not tread too harshly on the susceptibilities of the great nations, which they are in friendship with, and from which they derive a considerable amount of power and wealth. I think that altogether we will do wisely in passing this Bill. I do not object to even more restrictive

measures than the Bill proposes, because I want to preserve this country, as far as possible, to a white race. At the same time, I am not prepared to aim a blow at any class, and if we avoid that, and leave it to administration, we shall act wisely and not get the mother country into any trouble or difficulty. We do not wish to incur the displeasure of any race by naming that race in the Bill.

Donald Cameron on the Immigration Restriction Act

Source: [Parliament of Australia](#)

I am perfectly well aware that no words of mine will convince men whose minds have been already made up, but I have never been afraid to express my opinions fearlessly, or before any body of men, and I am not afraid to express them now. In my opinion the treatment the Chinese and the various alien races have received, and are going to receive if the people of this Commonwealth can prevail upon England to agree to this Bill, is unworthy of the so-called white race of Australia.

Jack Lang on the Immigration Bill

Source: [Parliament of Australia](#)

There is similar evidence that Communists have entered this country from Europe. The Minister talked about 100,000 migrants coming from Italy; but in the next breath he told us that as a third of the Italian population voted in support of the Communist party at the last general election in that country, we must expect a similar proportion of Communists among the Italian migrants who come here. If the Minister's deduction is correct, that means that 33,000 Communists are coming to Australia from Italy. There will be two classes of Communists among migrants coming to Australia. First, there will be those who openly avow their Communist sympathies. That class will not present much difficulty. Secondly, there will be the undercover Communists, who will have a real mission in this country. Communists of that class will be coming into Australia among displaced persons. They will come as Baits, Esto-

nians, Latvians or other nationalities akin to Russia. They will come here as Germans, Italians, Austrians, Poles or Czechs, because communism is international in its organization. In Canada, Communists were found to be engaging in espionage while posing as anti-Communists. A Communist agent would have no trouble in getting through the Minister's screen.

Senator John Armstrong on the Immigration Bill

Source: [Parliament of Australia](#)

This land is our land, to own and to develop. Our claim to hold this country and to continue its development rests not on conquest nor on feelings of hostility to any other people. It is based on the great work of our fathers, our grandfathers and great-grandfathers - the men who explored our great continent, tilled its land, built its cities, and developed its industries. Our forefathers handed to us a proud heritage. We can only preserve our heritage for our descendants by preserving the homogeneity of our race, and that we must and will do. We cherish no annexationist ideas,

we covet no other territory and we have no imperialist ambitions. On the contrary, we are eager to help the countries surrounding us to grow and prosper and to increase their wealth and the happiness of their people. In short, we want to assist our neighbours to achieve great social and industrial development.

Doris Blackburn on the Immigration Bill

Source: [Parliament of Australia](#)

We have not yet come to the time when the lion is able to lie down with the lamb, and while we work towards the coming of that day, we must take steps not only for our own protection, but also for the protection of those persons who come to this country. Very frequently such persons need our protection, particularly from the unfriendliness of Australians. We have shown unfriendliness and cruelty to the dark people from whom we took this country in the first place, and our use of the term "White Australia " is, in my opinion, an insult to those people as well as to others. The question of

the homogeneity of the race has been given prominence in this debate, but my reading of history has led me to the belief that when it suits the white man, he forgets all about his race, its purity and his obligations to it. He has cared little for the purity of other races. That statement can be substantiated by records too numerous to mention which are available both inside and outside of Australia. In the early days of the white settlement of this country, although Governor Philip was not instructed to encourage Asiatic migration, he was advised to secure a sufficient number of island women to serve the needs of the men under his control. No thought was given then to the preservation of the homogeneous character of our race or of the race from which the women were to be brought. It is sufficient for the purpose of my argument to point to the growth of the half-caste population whenever the white man goes, and to the degradation of the aboriginal races where the white men walks the land. Perhaps I may be pardoned for being sceptical when this argument for the preservation of

the homogeneous character of the race is advanced.

Scott Morrison on boat arrivals and detention, 2010

Source: [Parliament of Australia](#)

So the people of Australia should know that this government consider the communities' concerns about this matter so inconsequential that they are 'hysterical'. They do not warrant consultation before facilities are imposed on communities without the opportunity for consultation. They do not warrant, according to this government, the opportunity for a parliamentary committee, a committee of this parliament comprising members from all quarters of this House and the other chamber, to go and talk to them when the government have failed to do so. They do not think that is appropriate. They do not think consultation is appropriate. The government have no policy when it comes to stopping the unprecedented rate of illegal boat arrivals to Australia. There are a record number of boats and people who have arrived this year. The government hold all the records

when it comes to this: there are a record number of people in detention. They have no policy and they have no courage of their convictions when it comes to facing the community, so this parliament should do so on their behalf.

Alexander Downer on border protection

Source: [Parliament of Australia](#)

We frustrated that transit route by excising those territories from Australia's migration zone through the border protection act, which passed through this parliament. We have many reports now that people are still looking for ways to gain access to Australia, and obviously one possibility is through the Torres Strait. The government will do everything they possibly can to ensure that that does not happen. We will remain firm in our commitment to oppose the activities of people smugglers, to frustrate their activities and to keep our borders secure.

Catherine King MP on mandatory detention (2005)

Source: [Parliament of Australia](#)

Compassion is not a convenient cloak that you wrap yourself in, only to discard when the weather turns fair. It is something you either have in your heart or not, and frankly I can only see the image of the Prime Minister puffing out his chest, trying to build himself in stature, roaring out to his adoring audience, 'We will decide who comes to this country and the circumstances in which they come.'

Julia Gillard on unauthorised arrivals (2012)

Source: [Parliament of Australia](#)

I actually think it is of significance to this parliament that this is a bill brought to this place by an Independent member of parliament. Given all of the circumstances here, I, as the Labor leader, would want to walk from this place saying, 'No-one won, no-one lost; we just got something done.' And I think an Independent member's bill gives us all the opportunity to do just that—to go from this place saying: 'No-one won; no-one lost.

It wasn't about party politics. It wasn't about who has got what sort of party ticket in their pocket. We just worked together to get something done.'

Sarah Hanson-Young on mandatory detention

Source: [Parliament of Australia](#)

We cannot forget that the majority of these people—whether their applications are still at the beginning or whether their applications have been completed and they are still waiting on bridging visas now that the minister has capped the approving and granting of permanent protection—are genuine refugees. We know that because that is always what the statistics show. Ninety-six per cent of people who come here by boat are found to be people in genuine need of protection. Having to leave your homeland and engage in the dangerous journey to get out, hiding out until you can find someone to bring you to Australia or another country—no-one takes that decision lightly. Many of these people have had to leave behind family members, their entire lives and everything

they own. No-one makes that decision lightly. It is reflected in the number of people who are found to be in genuine need of protection. If, indeed, people wanted to take the 'easy way', they would probably buy a ticket and fly in on Qantas. That would be the easy way to get here. When people are really desperate, when they have to smuggle themselves and their families out of their country and struggle for survival before they reach safety, the only option they see before them is to come here by a dangerous boat.

Let us not beat around the bush. This bill does nothing to save people's lives. This bill does nothing to protect and help and care for vulnerable refugees, including children. This bill does nothing to help these people and it will not save their lives. This bill is all about punishment and all about whipping up fear and hatred and demonising people because of how they arrived and where they have come from. The fact is that the majority of people who arrive here by boat—whether it is in the already excised zone or the small handful

of people who find their way to the mainland—are people who could not come to Australia by plane because they never would have got a ticket without a visa, because of the countries that they come from, because of their need to flee from torture, from persecution, from war. This bill goes right to the heart of discriminating against refugees because of the places they have had to flee.

It is inhumane. It is in stark contrast to international law, and it has been condemned by international organisations, including the United Nations, time and time and time again. It is an affront to basic fairness and justice under the law.

Pauline Hanson's first House of Representatives speech (1996)

Source: [Parliament of Australia](#)

I and most Australians want our immigration policy radically reviewed and that of multiculturalism abolished. I believe we are in danger of being swamped by Asians. Between 1984 and 1995, 40 per cent of all migrants coming into this country were of Asian origin.

They have their own culture and religion, form ghettos and do not assimilate. Of course, I will be called racist but, if I can invite whom I want into my home, then I should have the right to have a say in who comes into my country. A truly multicultural country can never be strong or united. The world is full of failed and tragic examples, ranging from Ireland to Bosnia to Africa and, closer to home, Papua New Guinea. America and Great Britain are currently paying the price.

Pauline Hanson's first Senate speech (2016)

Source: [Parliament of Australia](#)

In my first speech in 1996 I said we were in danger of being swamped by Asians. This was not said out of disrespect for Asians but was meant as a slap in the face to both the Liberal and Labor governments who opened the floodgates to immigration, targeting cultures purely for the vote, as expressed by former Labor minister Barry Jones—to such an extent that society changed too rapidly due to migrants coming in the front door but

also the back door, via New Zealand. Now we are in danger of being swamped by Muslims, who bear a culture and ideology that is incompatible with our own.

transcended a generation. I remember my two boys, Will and Henry, at a very young age being transfixed by their remote controlled Darth Vader.